

# THE INDEPENDENT

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THURSDAY 24 APRIL 1997

WEATHER: Mainly warm and sunny (45p) 40p

INSIDE THE TABLOID

IN THE TABLOID  
6 PAGES OF FILMS

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ENIS COMPTON:  
SPORT'S FIRST  
SUPERSTAR

## ‘Think again. Look in my eyes and know this: I will always deal fair and true’

Colin Brown and Anthony Bevins

John Major last night stepped up his election campaign with an amazing appeal to voters – “look in my eyes” – and to back him rather than his party.

With just one week to go, and all to play for, the Conservative leader made a savage personal attack on Tony Blair as a man who breaks his promises, and

deal fair and true by this great nation.”

Mr Major was exploiting the undoubted fact that he is more popular with the voters than his party, fractious and divided as it is. But last night's appeal was also a gamble on the public's willingness to see the election as a presidential contest between two party leaders.

With Labour officials warning of the “nightmare” prospect of a fifth Tory term, and the confirmation of a one-party state, Mr Blair's positive campaign yesterday turned to a new initiative to create a special “People's Lottery” fund, to divert Elba into popular causes like education and health.

But the Tories last night delivered a diversionary coup by publishing a copy of an old Labour election “War Book” setting out strategic campaign targets. Brian Mawhinney, the Conservative Party Chairman, said the document, sent to the Tories “in a plain brown envelope” six months ago, indicated a campaign based on “smear and scare”.

He suggested that the leak could have come from a Labour Party worker who was as appalled by “the cynical attitude of those behind working with the rest of the country will be when they see this document”.

All parties have “War Books”, setting out day-by-day campaign strategies, but they normally remain confidential, and Labour said last night that the document that had been sent to the Conservatives was a year old, out of date, and did not include its election masterplan.

“Think about it. Think seriously. Think again. Look in my eyes and know this. I will always



## Travel firms' staff paid to inform on customers

Jason Bennetto  
Crime Correspondent

Britain's travel agents are being paid to operate as undercover drug informants. High street sales staff, along with booking agents for airlines and ferries, are given substantial cash rewards by HM Customs in return for tip-offs about suspected drug-runners and money launderers.

Customs and Excise officers are also providing training and advice for would-be informers about how to spot a criminal, and a hotline to report them. Successful “snouts” can earn from £50 to as much as £10,000 in exceptional cases.

It is understood that one of the four largest travel agents gets about 20 reports of suspicious customers every day, although the majority of these are false alarms.

The use of informants is being encouraged in all parts of the travel industry.

British Airways is offering to pay its staff extra bonuses, in addition to any Customs rewards, for positive reports. Assistance from BA staff at London airports helped Customs officers make 56 drug seizures, worth about £7m, in the first six months of last year.

Travel agents are encouraged to look out for holiday-makers acting suspiciously. Among the tell-tale signs are customers who pay for holidays or flights with large sums of cash, have new passports (they may be forged), are not interested in getting a cheap deal, take trips to well known drug centres such as Holland, Jamaica, and Thailand, and who pay at the last minute.

A Customs spokesman said:

“We are after things that will arouse peoples' suspicion, which might be connected with drug-smuggling.”

“Occasionally the information leads to seizures and arrests but more often it adds another piece to the jigsaw.”

He added: “If someone gave us the names, dates and delivery, of a major drugs operation they could get from £20,000 to £30,000 reward, but this is not the kind of detailed information travel agents come across.”

The drugs hotline – 0800 595000 – receives about 2,500 calls a month, although the proportion of these that are made by travel agents is unknown.

Travel companies were quick yesterday to play down the idea that their staff had become paid spies.

Thomas Cook, the fourth largest travel agent, trains all new employees about how to identify suspected criminals. A spokeswoman said: “They have a prompt card with key points to look out for.”

Details of suspicious customers are passed on to the head office, as the company encourages employees collecting reward money.

Luna Poly, Britain's largest travel agent, confirmed it has “security procedures” which were used by staff to identify potential offenders, but refused to discuss any of the details. A spokeswoman denied that staff received cash rewards: “There's no sanction from head office [for Customs] to recruit staff.”

Informers are increasingly being used to help tackle the growing drug problem. There were record seizures last year, which rose by 6 per cent to 115,000, the highest ever.

The document's summary of Labour weaknesses, it was said, were not Labour assessments, but rather a summary of Conservatives' views.

While Tory campaign strategists are focusing on private polling showing the voters do not trust Mr Blair, Labour campaign managers have noted that the Tories have stopped running their “New Labour, New Danger” poster, with a red-eyed Mr Blair.

They believe that such vicious personal attacks are provoking voter hostility.

Nevertheless, Mr Major last night went for the Labour leader in a strong personal at-

tack, questioning his fitness for office – a tactic that will be reinforced in the final days of the campaign.

Contrasting his own leadership style with Mr Blair's, Mr Major said: “Like me or loathe me, on the issues I put before you today you know where I stand.”

He accused Mr Blair of having “shifted and shuffled and shifted again” on his plans for a Scottish parliament with tax-raising powers. “I do not truly believe Mr Blair understands Scotland. I wonder sometimes how much he even cares for Scotland. More and more recently he has seemed to care

more for the use he can make of Scotland.”

“His policy combines a sense of carelessness with a whiff of arrogance that I for one find slightly unappealing... Mr Blair seems incapable of keeping to one policy for more than a few months.”

Ridiculing Mr Blair as “the young mastermind” who said “pass” to questions in the campaign, Mr Major said the Labour leader “in all his experience may not realise that these questions, unanswered, might eventually do our Union to death.”

He accused Mr Blair of changing policy to suit his own

convenience, and seeking power for its own sake – to win whatever the price. “I see the Labour red is changing to an imperial purple – and I see a man carried away by his own propaganda. How many more promises does Mr Blair have to break before the people of Britain understand his true nature?”

Warning that Mr Blair would “sell out” Britain in Europe, Mr Major said Labour posed three great threats to Britain – more power for the unions, a soft touch for a federal Europe and paving the way for separatism with Scotland. “Labour, led by Mr Blair, will destroy British prosperity, risk dividing Britain and put us on the escalator to a federal Europe.”

Labour received a dual boost last night from opinion polls which showed its support holding up, and the announcement that Alan Sugar, the arch-rival of Thatcher's boss of computer company Amstrad, has switched allegiance to Labour.

Labour is 19 per cent ahead of the Conservatives, according to a Gallup poll for ITN's Channel 4 News.

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Taxes: the big unanswered questions  
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THE INDEPENDENT  
election '97

### QUICKLY

**Co-op goes on offensive**  
The Co-operative Wholesale Society went on the offensive against Andrew Ragan's Lancia Trust yesterday, accusing the 31-year old entrepreneur of encouraging Co-op employees to “steal to order”. It threatened continued legal action and said it would press for damages against Mr Ragan and his “fellow conspirators”. Page 22

**Yacoub escapes claim**  
A couple whose son was left brain-damaged after a heart transplant, carried out by Sir Magdi Yacoub, lost their claim for damages yesterday after a judge ruled they had been properly warned of the risks. Page 3

**Peruvian plaudits**  
Tuesday night's assault on the Japanese Ambassador's residence in Lima, in which 71 of 72 hostages were freed from the Tupac Amaru guerrillas holding them, was one of the most successful anti-terrorist operations ever. Page 13

## Elephants on pill trample family values

Mary Braid  
Johannesburg

Any proponent of sound conservative family values could have told them how it would end. In a world first, wild elephants were introduced to the Pill, now six months later, the bold experiment has gone disastrously wrong. Elephant society is falling apart.

After six months of intervention in South Africa's Kruger National Park, the resulting possibilities of elephantine free love have proved a social disaster. On offer was jumbo-sized birth control. The result was social and sexual mayhem.

It has been discovered that specially-designed hormone implants, the park's pioneering instrument of population con-

trol, leave females permanently on heat and create rampaging bulls, trapped in a state of perpetual – and dangerous – sexual excitement.

“The bulls want to constantly mate with the females,” complained Doug Grobler, the Kruger Park vet responsible.

Female elephants usually on heat just two days in every 17 weeks, had been hot for an entire six months at a time. Dr Grobler said the cows were being constantly harassed. Whenever they went, a long line of bulls trailed behind them.

“At one stage there were eight bulls around one cow,” he added. “This is unacceptable.”

The oestrogen implants, injected into sedated females, work along the same lines as the pill in women. They have achieved their contraceptive

aim. In six months no cow has become pregnant despite the unflagging – not to say embarrassing – attention of the bulls.

But families have broken down. In the explosive sexual atmosphere, responsibilities are forgotten. Two baby elephants have gone missing and are presumed dead. Dr Grobler and his staff believe they strayed from home because their mothers were permanently distracted.

The elephant pill's unforeseen effects will encourage critics who condemned the controversial programme from the start as an extravagant waste of money, driven by human sentimentality.

Rural development groups argued elephants should be free to have as many calves as they pleased, and to expand

their families to the size God intended. Rural African communities could then kill and eat the surplus.

Mr Grobler admitted yesterday that the programme was motivated by a sentimental desire to create a painless method of population control which would keep herds small, happy and well cared for. The idea of simply letting populations explode and culling later he said was considered “barbaric” by some.

Mr Grobler now acknowledges the Kruger was misguided. Unwanted pregnancies have been prevented but the social cost has been too high a price to pay.

Yesterday he said the programme was shelved, and the behaviour of elephants closely watched to ensure it



returned to normal. Paul Dacre, editor of the Daily Mail, was unavailable for comment last night.

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## significant shorts

## Howard rebuffed by Belfast judge in IRA jail review

Another judicial rebuff was handed down to Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, yesterday when a "whole life" prison tariff on two IRA bombers was overruled by a High Court judge in Belfast.

Mr Justice Kerr said Mr Howard had wrongly declined to explain why he had departed from the view of the trial judge and the former Home Secretary, David Waddington, when increasing the minimum term to be served by Paul Kavanagh and Thomas Quigley, who were convicted at the Old Bailey in 1985 of three murders arising out of two London bombings.

The trial judge, Mr Justice McCowan, fixed the tariff at 35 years, later increased to 50 by Mr Waddington, but the then Lord Chief Justice, Lord Lane, had said he would not release them at all. Quashing Mr Howard's decision to revise the tariff up to whole life, Mr Justice Kerr said: "I consider that the Home Secretary was obliged to explain why he was minded to depart from the judicial view expressed by Mr Justice McCowan and to increase the tariff beyond that which had been fixed by the former home secretary."

Patricia Wynn Davies

## 'Dangerous' killer on the run

A convicted murderer was on the run after escaping from prison, police said yesterday.

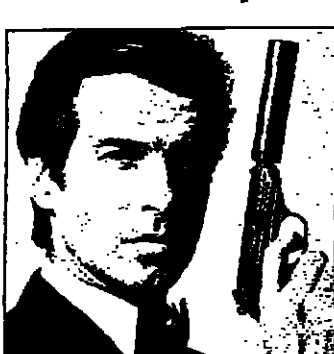
Frank Winsom-Smith, 31, went missing from Wellingborough Prison, Northants. Winsom-Smith was serving a life sentence plus an 11-year sentence. Police said he was "dangerous and unpredictable" and should not be approached.

## New corruption trial for Army officer

The jury trying a senior Army officer on corruption charges was discharged at London's Southwark Crown Court yesterday and a new trial ordered to begin today.

Major John Ewart, 51, of Dilton Marsh in Wiltshire, was responsible for ordering food for the British garrison in Berlin, denies taking "well over" £100,000 in "backhanders" in return for feeding lucrative contracts to a British company.

## James Bond picks German marque



James Bond is driving a German car again in his next movie, it emerged yesterday. Actor Pierce Brosnan (pictured) will have a BMW 750i executive saloon in the new film, *Tomorrow Never Dies*, which is due to be released in December.

BMW fought off stiff competition from Jaguar and Aston Martin to secure the agreement – and it looks as though the famous Aston Martin DB5 has definitely been driven out of Q's equally famous workshop for the last time.

## Contract killers get life jail terms

The daughters of accountant David Wilson finally put a five-year ordeal behind them last night after watching the contract killers who executed their father receive life jail terms.

The nightmare for Michelle Wilson, 31, and her younger sister Lisa, 29, began when hitmen Stephen Playle and Michael Crossley burst into their luxury Lancashire home on March 5, 1992 and shot their father dead.

The murder led a Lancashire Police team on a trail that took them halfway across the world as they brought to justice the sinister American criminal Michael Austin, who ordered the murder, and his UK middleman Stephen Schepke, both now serving life sentences.

It came full circle at Liverpool Crown Court yesterday when Mr Justice Mantell sent friends Crossley and Playle to prison for life.

## Royal bodyguard on guns charges

Royal Protection Squad policeman Michael Coulton was remanded in custody when he appeared before magistrates on firearms charges yesterday.

Mr Coulton, 52, appeared before magistrates in Bracknell, Berks, on three firearms charges, which allege that on a date between February 23 and April 22 he was in possession of a home-made firearm with intent to endanger life. A second charge related to the possession of the home-made firearm without holding a firearms certificate. He was also charged with possessing a machine gun on 16 January.

## Equity agrees actors' pay rise

Equity leaders yesterday agreed new minimum pay for actors of £225 a week from this year. Actors' minimum pay will rise to £250 a week from April 1998, and by inflation plus 2 per cent from April 1999. A new company and stage manager grade has also been introduced with minimum pay of £261 a week from April 1997.

## Frozen food threat to UK bats

Freezing nights are causing bats to starve because they have caused their insect food supply to die out. The bats were encouraged out of hibernation by the warm spells of early Spring, but the frosts have left them little in the way of moths and other night flyers to eat.

"I've never seen so many malnourished bats at this time of year," said bat expert Patty Briggs of the Bat Conservation Trust.

## people



Terre'Blanche: A pathetic, farcical figure who floundered from the court (Photograph: Reuters)

## Tantrums and tears as Terre'Blanche convicted

Eugene Terre'Blanche, the neo-Nazi many once feared would plunge South Africa into bloody civil war, was yesterday convicted of attempting to murder a former black employee and assaulting another.

The verdict on the country's most infamous white supremacist led to extraordinary scenes in the Potchefstroom Magistrate's Court, which was packed with camouflage-clad followers of Terre'Blanche's Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB).

The large and hefty AWB leader, whom black witnesses said they were afraid to testify against, fought back tears as he accused magistrate Chris Ertzen, judicial head of this ultra-conservative rural "dorp" in North-West Province, of becoming the accomplice of the African National Congress. "You are a traitor," the judgment is a political judgment," he said.

There were more tears when trial was set at 2,000 rand (£300). Terre'Blanche said he could not afford it and promised he would not to abscond before sentencing on June 17. The judge reduced bail by half and the AWB clubbed together to meet it.

Potchefstroom is at the heart of AWB country.

Apartheid may be gone but here old habits die hard. AWB members routinely insulted and intimidated blacks who attended the trial. Throughout the proceedings the fat white AWB members sat and forced the blacks to stand at the back of the courtroom.

Maurius Oliver, who worked for Terre'Blanche, testified against his "boss", but asked for police protection and claimed his employer had assaulted him too.

Terre'Blanche was found guilty of attempting to murder Paul Motshabi, a black hobbler who hobbled into court to testify how he was beaten during a month-long campaign of permanent brain damage by Terre'Blanche.

Terre'Blanche charged and argued with Motshabi but not to have harmed him. He said he had found Motshabi lying in a ditch.

The AWB hit international headlines in 1994 when three members were shot dead by a black policeman after shooting their way through the black Bophuthatswana "independent" homeland in an attempt to prevent an inevitable black liberation war.

Mary Blair, Johannesburg

## Billie-Jo's mother in tearful exit from funeral

The natural mother of Billie-Jo Jenkins (right) missed her daughter's funeral yesterday, after storming out of the chapel in tears when the murdered teenager's foster mother arrived uninvited. Debbie Woods had specifically asked that the foster mother, Lois Jenkins, should stay away from the packed service in east London for the popular 13-year-old.

Ms Woods entered the chapel after the horse-drawn carriage carrying Billie-Jo's 5ft white coffin had arrived. She was followed by almost 300 of the teenager's friends and relations, clinging to each other for support in their grief, many of whom had made the journey from Billie-Jo's home town of Hastings, East Sussex.

But then Mrs Jenkins, whose estranged husband Siobhán was charged with Billie-Jo's murder, arrived for the service with her four daughters. As soon as she walked into the chapel, just moments before the service was due to begin, Ms Woods looked around, saw her and froze in horror.

Mourners watched in shock as Ms Woods then ran out of the chapel in tears followed by her boyfriend. The couple then drove away from the City of London Cemetery and missed the service as well as the burial.

Siobhán Jenkins, who is currently



on bail, did not attend the service. He is accused of bludgeoning Billie-Jo to death as she painted the patio doors of her foster family's home in Hastings on 15 February.

A friend of Ms Woods explained afterwards: "Lois is obviously grieving as much as anyone but she is married to the man charged with murdering Billie-Jo and she should really have respected Debbie's wishes and stayed away to prevent further grief."

"Debbie is heartbroken at not being able to see her daughter being laid to rest. It is a tragedy for her."

However, a friend of Mrs Jenkins defended her, saying: "She loved Billie-Jo so much that she could not bear not to come to the funeral with her four daughters."

## Four-year-old 'Tiger' tees off

He is more of a tiger cub than a Tiger Woods, but four-year-old Robert Aldred's precocious golfing skills have prompted his father to predict he will be the next prodigy on the greens.

Robert has surprised golfers at his local club with his "unbelievable" ability. According to his father, Bob, he has managed to par several three- and four-par holes up to 345 yards in length. He can also drive a golf ball up to 140 yards.

As a result, he has achieved what many a social-climbing executive can only dream of – free membership of his local golf club, at Warley in the West Midlands.

Mr Aldred said that if his son progresses at the same rate he could be Britain's answer to Tiger Woods, who recently became the youngest winner of the US Masters at the age of 21.

"I'm absolutely gobsmacked by some of the things he has done," Mr Aldred said at his home in Warley.

"He is the equivalent of a single figure handicapper given some of the things he does. His drives are unbelievable – he can hit them 80-90 yards every time."

A spokesman for the Professional Golfers' Association said: "Robert has obviously taken to the game naturally and he could be a natural champion." Mark Rowe

## briefing

## SCHOOLS

## Problem governors drive head teachers to retirement

Feeble and inefficient governors are driving head teachers to early retirement, according to a survey published yesterday. The study, by the National Association of Head Teachers, says that more than half of heads believe their governors either cannot or will not do their job.

Others, say heads, interfere too much. They complain that some are trying to change the curriculum for political reasons, while others are storming into classrooms and telling teachers how to teach. Government reforms have given 300,000 school governors, unpaid volunteers, unprecedented powers to manage budgets, monitor the curriculum and appoint and dismiss staff.

The survey, of 150 heads in the London region, tried to discover why so many were leaving their posts early and why about 40 per cent of headships in the capital were not filled at the first attempt.

Ill-health, long hours, governors, government reforms and new inspections organised by the Office for Standards in Education were all given as reasons. The survey found that 53 per cent of heads felt their governors were not effective.

Judith Judd

## HEALTH

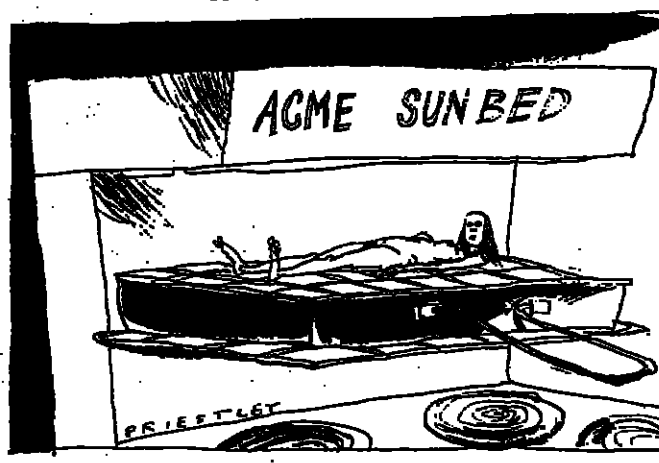
## Sunbeds more dangerous than sun

Sunbeds emit three times as many ultra-violet "A" rays as the sun itself, putting those who use them at risk of skin cancer and skin damage, the Imperial Cancer Research Fund warned yesterday. But more women are suffering from what the charity dubs "tanorexia" – the dangerous desire to have a permanent tan and use sunbeds more than once a week.

An average 30-minute sunbed session will give you the equivalent UVA dose as a day basking on the beach. There are three types of ultra-violet rays – UVA, UVB and UVC. UVC is the strongest, but is prevented from reaching the earth by the ozone layer. UVB is the most damaging to the skin and is particularly linked to skin cancers. Until a few years ago doctors thought that UVA was safe. However there is now growing evidence that over-exposure to UVA may cause skin cancer – especially in its most serious form, melanoma.

It also affects the middle layer of the skin, or dermis, damaging elastin and collagen. Injury to this layer is responsible for lines and wrinkles and sagging skin.

Glenda Cooper



## MEDICINE

## Sharks may hold cancer key

Sharks may provide a means of attacking cancer that is to be tested for the first time in patients later this year. An extract from shark tissue called squalamine, discovered in the stomach of the dog fish, is thought to prevent tumours from growing by cutting off their blood supply.

It was discovered by researchers working for Magainin Pharmaceuticals, a biotechnology company based in Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania, USA. Chairman Jay Moorin told *New Scientist* magazine: "We were looking for antibiotics in the shark tissue but instead we found a whole family of new compounds that stop cells from dividing."

The compounds are believed to act as a primitive immune system in the shark because they kill infectious microbes. Of the 18 compounds discovered, squalamine showed the most promise as an anti-cancer agent. Other substances have shown potential as treatments for AIDS.

Trials of the drug are expected to begin in the autumn in patients with brain or breast cancer, *New Scientist* said. The idea is to use it to prevent a relapse, rather than as a primary treatment.

## MOTORING

## Swedish security second to none

Swedish car manufacturer Volvo produces the most secure vehicles, according to a study of cars on British roads carried out for motor insurers Eagle Star Direct. The next most secure vehicles are Nissans, followed by Jaguars, Renaults, Mercedes and Fords.

The company said it was not giving details of manufacturers at the bottom of its list. "We recently revealed that the UK has the worst car crime in Europe and that Leeds is the worst city for crime, so we wanted a good news story this time," said a spokesman.

## THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

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مكتبة الأصل



## A fair field full of art...

Clare Garner

A passion for Shakespeare plays inspired the painter Philip Sutton, RA, to spend two years depicting the bard and his work. The fruits of his labour of love will be exhibited in London next month.

The exhibition, sponsored by Halifax, will start out at the Royal Academy of Arts and the Globe Theatre and then travel to Leeds' Royal Armouries Museum via Stratford-upon-Avon, the birthplace of Shakespeare, who died 381 years ago yesterday.

Sutton, 69, began work in his studio in Manorbier, near Tenby, in Wales, with Henry V, Elizabethan England, France and the battle of Agincourt. "It has been a great revelation to me that I could translate that particular part of English history into something I could do myself," he said. "It combined the ideas I had many years ago of dressing things up - the theatre of life."

"One thing that struck me about Henry V marching his army through France," said Mr Sutton, explaining the presence of farm animals in his paintings, "was that 15,000 men went through the countryside, but farmers and people round about would have remained undisturbed, even though the action was taking place not far away."

Zoe Wanamaker, whose father, Sam, was responsible for resurrecting the Globe Theatre, summed up Mr Sutton's work: "Joy, energy and colour. I think that's the secret."

Sutton is the latest in a line of English painters inspired by Shakespeare, including William Hogarth, Joshua Reynolds and William Blake.



Labour of love: Philip Sutton displaying some of the paintings which were inspired by his passion for the works of Shakespeare

Photograph: Brian Harris

## Yacoub cleared of negligence

Parents lose claim for damages over brain-damaged son

Jeremy Lawrence  
Health Editor

A couple whose son was left brain damaged after a heart transplant carried out by Sir Magdi Yacoub lost their claim for damages yesterday after a judge ruled they had been properly warned of the risks.

Kevin and Linda Poynter said they would never have allowed the operation by Britain's leading heart transplant surgeon to go ahead had they had an inkling of what the outcome might be. They said they would have preferred to let their 16-month-old son Matthew die in peace, and only agreed to the transplant after being put under pressure by the medical team.

But Sir Maurice Drake, giving judgment in the High Court, rejected the claim that the doctors had been too zealous or had underplayed the risks. He found that the couple had not asked directly about the risk of brain damage and that it would have

been unlikely to have altered their decision if they had. Faced with the prospect of an 80 per cent chance of survival for their son through surgery, or certain death, most other parents faced with the same situation would also have consented.

"The outcome means Mr and Mrs Poynter, of Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, who were legally aided, must continue caring for Matthew, now aged 10, without financial help. He is profoundly brain damaged and needs round-the-clock care."

The couple are vegetarians and were resistant to the idea of a transplant. Mr Poynter, an osteopath, told the court: "The heart is not just a pump, it is part of the person, part of the mind, body and soul."

Matthew, who was born in August 1986, developed a heart condition in which the left ventricle became enlarged. He was seen at the local hospital in Stevenage by a cardiologist from Harefield who referred the

baby to the heart transplant centre. According to their solicitor, Tom Osborne, the couple were not opposed to orthodox medicine and gave Matthew the drugs he was prescribed. But they were against a transplant.

"However, the doctors at Harefield persuaded them that they had no rational case for opposing it. They were told that either the boy would die in a few days or he would live for two or three years a near normal life. They felt they had no choice."

The transplant was a success and the new heart still functions 10 years later. Matthew was the 30th child in the country to receive a heart transplant and one of the youngest. But he was so ill at the time of the operation that he suffered a cardiac arrest when given the anaesthetic and his heart was kept going with massage for 30 minutes until he could be attached to a heart-bypass machine. It is believed the brain damage occurred during this period.

He is the only one of the 177 children who have had heart transplants at Harefield who has suffered brain damage.

Sir Magdi told the court the risk was so small - less than 1 per cent - that he would not tell parents about it unless specifically asked.

Transplant surgeons yesterday agreed it was impractical, and could be unwise, to tell patients of every conceivable risk. Bob Johnson, kidney surgeon and chairman of the British Transplant Society, said: "We tell patients about the classical risks - of dying, of the organ being rejected, of side-effects of the immuno-suppressant drugs. But you can't go through every remote risk."

Afterwards, the couple's solicitor said that the £250,000 cost of the legal battle against Hillingdon Health Authority would have been better spent on healthcare for children like Matthew than in forcing the authority to respect parents' views.



Driven man: Sir Magdi outside the court yesterday

## School expels boy of 9 for possessing cannabis

Judith Judd  
Education Editor

A nine-year-old boy has been expelled from his primary school for alleged possession of cannabis.

The head of Whittings Hill primary school in Barnet, Maureen McGoldrick, suspended the boy, thought to be the youngest child to be expelled for alleged drug possession, after the police were called in. Later, she decided to exclude him permanently.

Staff called in the police when they found the boy carrying what they suspected to be a drug.

The boys' parents are reported to be angry that they were not present when police interviewed the boy who told his father he had found the substance in class.

They are also reported to have said that the boy told police he found the substance at home because he was frightened.

A spokeswoman for New Scotland Yard confirmed that police had been called to the school on 21 March.

"Because the child was under the age of criminal responsibility no further action was taken in the matter of alleged possession of a controlled substance."

She said the case had been reported to their Youth and Community section because a

child was involved, but there had been no inquiry and the substance had not been analysed.

Anne Jarvis, chairman of Barnet council's education committee, said: "We are aware of the situation and we are monitoring it."

"The head teacher has a perfect right to exclude the child. It is a sensible precaution and we appreciate why she has taken it," she said. "The governing body will meet to decide whether to endorse her decision. If they do endorse it, the child's parents will have the right to appeal against their decision."

At this stage, she said the local authority's role was simply to advise the school. If the parents appealed, it would appoint an independent appeals panel to hear the case.

Recent surveys have shown that growing numbers of primary school children are taking drugs, but it is still comparatively rare.

A survey of 4000 11-13-year-olds in London, published in December, found that 96 per cent had never tried drugs. Thirty per cent of 14-16-year-olds had tried drugs.

A national study of 7700 from Edinburgh University published last year showed that 42 per cent of 15-16-year-olds had taken drugs, mainly cannabis.

## Brooding pioneer at the heart of Britain's transplant programme

For 17 years Professor Sir Magdi Yacoub has led the heart transplant programme in Britain. With his huge domed forehead and dark, brooding eyes peering out above a theatre mask he has become one of medicine's few, instantly recognisable, faces, writes Jeremy Lawrence.

He operated on his first patient at Harefield hospital in January 1980, a few months after Sir Terence English had performed the first successful transplant in the United Kingdom at Papworth hospital, Cambridgeshire.

Although neither man courted publicity, the patrician Sir Terence, with his fondness for country walks, contrasted with the missionary style of Sir Magdi who seemed truly fulfilled only in the operating theatre.

In the early days, Sir Magdi's relentless demands on staff and resources provoked criticism from those who saw other specialties depleted. Now heart transplants are an accepted part of the surgical repertoire. More than 300 operations a year are performed in Britain and

Harefield is among the world's leading centres. Last year, Harefield completed its 2,000th heart transplant. Half the patients are still alive. Today, a new patient has a 60 per cent chance of surviving 10 years. Britain's longest survivor, Derrick Morris, aged 65, was Sir Magdi's third patient and has lived for 16 years since the operation.

Sir Magdi, 60, has given no hint that he is thinking of retiring. He still keeps a punishing schedule, working long hours, nights and weekends.

## St Hilda's blocks places for men

Judith Judd  
Education Editor

St Hilda's, Oxford University's only remaining all-women's college, yesterday refused to back proposals to admit male dons.

The college, Alma Mater of Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, was forced to consider the change because its single-sex status means it does not have enough science fellows. While it is allowed to fill its own fellowships with women, it does not have the money to do so.

The change in statutes would allow it to share the cost of fellowships with the university and accept university appointments, four-fifths of which go to men.

At present the college has only four fellows in science compared with the ten it needs.

The college's governing body voted in favour of admitting male fellows by 17 to 10, but a

two-thirds majority is required to change the statutes and end a 100-year-old tradition.

Undergraduates and post-graduates at the college who had campaigned against the change were delighted with the result. In a recent poll, seven out of ten opposed the idea of male fellows.

Katherine Terrell, 23, a post-graduate who is president of the Middle Common Room, said: "We are extremely pleased. One of the main reasons we oppose the change is that the status of women within the university is not what we would like. Only 17 per cent of fellowships are held by women and in science it is only 5 per cent."

But she added: "We are a bit worried about the college's future. We urgently need to raise money for fellowships."

There is no plan to admit male undergraduates, Ms Terrell said. Students feared the presence of male dons would lead to co-education in the future.

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# Judge blamed over Bridgewater trial

QC tells appeal of non-disclosure of key fingerprint evidence

Patricia Wynn Davies  
Legal Affairs Editor

The judge, prosecution and defence lawyers all failed to secure a fair trial for James Robinson, one of the four accused of the 1978 Carl Bridgewater murder, the Court of Appeal was told yesterday.

The failings included the non-disclosure by the Crown of key fingerprint evidence from the newspaper boy's bicycle, Lord Justice Roch and two other judges heard.

Patrick O'Connor QC was opening the case for Mr Robinson on the third day of the appeal by the Bridgewater Three and the late Patrick Molloy, whose "confession" led largely to the convictions the following year. "If Mr Molloy's appeal is properly recognised as a tale of

police deception and oppression, Mr Robinson's appeal is a tale of the failure of the legal system to secure him a fair trial and to satisfy... safeguards against injustice," the QC said.

The Crown has already conceded that material backing claims that police forced the confession, the so-called exhibit 54, from Mr Molloy, is enough to make Mr Robinson's murder conviction unsafe. But Mr O'Connor said that the structure of the case against Mr Robinson was riddled with faults anyway.

It would be appropriate for the court to recognise that his conviction would have been quashed quite independently of the "earthquake" of prejudice against him from exhibit 54, the QC said. "We submit that almost every aspect of the system let him down at trial."

Mr Robinson, 63, and cousins Michael Hickey, 35, and Vincent Hickey, 42, have been on unconditional bail since February, when it emerged that police had fabricated a statement to induce Mr Molloy to confess to being at Yew Tree Farm, Stourbridge, West Midlands, where the 13-year-old was killed with a shotgun as he stumbled upon a burglary.

Mr O'Connor told the judges that one of the most significant complaints against the trial judge was that he "wove exhibit 54, Molloy's confession, into his summing up in such a fashion as not only to fail to protect Mr Robinson from prejudice, but to exacerbate it."

The judge [Sir Maurice Drake, now retired] had also "neutralised" one of Mr Robinson's most important defence

points - the gross inconsistencies between the descriptions by eye-witnesses and Mr Robinson's shaven-headed appearance at the time of the crime.

Prosecution counsel had cross-examined him for nearly a day without regard to the proper rules, and failed to ensure the disclosure of fingerprint lifts from exhibit 23, the teenager's bicycle, which had undoubtedly been handled by one of the intruders, Mr O'Connor said.

Defence counsel seemed "patently not to have read documents provided on a plate", which contained the first accounts of important witnesses against Mr Robinson, had sat "without objection" though an improper cross-examination and failed to object to other inadmissible evidence.

The appeal continues.



Smoking: Emergency services tackle a brush fire on the Isle of Wight downs yesterday Photograph: Patrick Eden

## Winds fan big fires in two counties

Matthew Brace

Large tracts of two counties were ablaze yesterday as hundreds of fire-fighters fought some of the largest fires seen for many years in Cornwall and on the Isle of Wight.

Fanned by high winds, walls of fire spread rapidly across bone-dry gorse and moor land. The fires are the latest in a series which have ignited the countryside during the current dry spell.

Fire crews in Cornwall fighting a huge gorse fire which devastated up to 1,000 acres between St Ives and St Just, said they saw flames moving faster than they could run.

The fire caused a huge pall of smoke which could be seen from several miles away and which one witness said looked like a nuclear bomb mushroom cloud. The main coast road between St Ives and Land's End was closed.

At the height of the blaze 120 firemen and support vehicles from all over the county fought the flames.

One fireman suffered superficial burns.

The affected area is one of

western Europe's most historically significant landscapes. The fire-hit heath with its ancient field systems is an area of outstanding natural beauty, with Sites of Special Scientific Interest and is part of the Ministry of Agriculture's environmentally sensitive area scheme.

It also has one of the largest concentrations of scheduled ancient monuments in western Europe, according to the local council.

The blaze in Cornwall is the third huge fire to hit the West Country in recent weeks. After it was brought under control fire investigators moved in to investigate how it started.

Meanwhile, more than 100 firefighters battled to control a huge fire which engulfed 200 acres of Brightstone Forest on the Isle of Wight.

All the Isle's full-time and part-time firefighters converged on the scene as the blaze spread through tinder dry scrub and copse land.

As the fire spread, the island's brigade, Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, sent over four appliances, a water carrier and fire crews by ferry.

## Beetles warm to heat of the forest



Charles Arthur  
Science Editor

Most animals flee forest fires - but buprestid beetles seek them out, swarming to them from distances of up to 30 miles away, because they need to lay their eggs in freshly burnt wood.

Scientists had always wondered exactly how the beetles, of the genus *Melanophila*, were able to detect conflagrations at such a distance. Now, a team at the Friedrich Wilhelms University in Bonn, Germany, has learnt how the beetles are able to function - as heat-seeking missiles. Two organs found in pits beneath their thorax are sensitive to precisely the infra-red wavelengths produced by burning woodlands.

Few animals are able to sense heat directly. Humans detect it

through its effect on the skin rather than as an innate sensation; thus chemicals or friction can generate the same "feeling" as warmth. Many snakes have pits near their nose which can detect the heat given off by warm-blooded prey. But the beetles' sensors operate differently. As the scientists found, the beetles "feel" heat as if it were pressure - though a welcome one. Snakes, on the other hand, have nerve fibres that act as true thermoreceptors, and literally "smell" heat.

In the experiments the German team detected activity in the nerves running from the pits in response to an infra-red lamp. Writing today, in the science journal *Nature*, the scientists said: "This provides the first physiological evidence of an insect infra-red receptor."

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# Truckers bear a heavy load

French told to lift their blockade, but drivers stay gloomy

Randeep Ramesh  
Transport Correspondent

Joe Russell has been driving for 27 years. Fifteen hours a day, six days a week. Yesterday, taking an enforced break with some 1,500 other lorry drivers stuck in a mammoth log jam in Folkestone, he was wondering why he bothers.

Travelling down from Glasgow in his own "tractor", he was trying to take 16 tons of fish to France. The hold-up is wasting valuable hours: "I have got fresh fish and maybe 36 hours of fridge fuel. I've done nearly 20 hours and haven't even made it across the Channel yet."

The French fishermen's blockade of Calais, Boulogne and Dunkirk caused chaos for thousands of travellers. Mr Russell and his colleagues included. The fishermen said the

It's all free market now... the rules are easily broken

strike would continue until at least 10am today.

Various attempts were made throughout the day to try to put pressure on the striking fishermen to call off their blockade.

One such effort took place at three o'clock, yesterday, when rival cross-Channel ferry companies cast aside their differences to begin legal proceedings against the fishermen, who have dropped their nets outside the major harbours in protest at a new European Union ruling over mesh size of fishing nets.

As far as Mr Russell is concerned, the blockade is just the latest in a series of vexatious lorry drivers have suffered since the ban of regulations in the 1980s which spawned myriad trucking firms. "It's all free-market now. There are rules - but they are easily broken. Not by me, mind," says Mr Russell. "You get cashiers, work that is completely off the company books. You get trip money, a flat fee to deliver goods with no questions asked - all that means is that you get people working all the time without concern for their health. You're supposed to



Game plan: Stranded truckers playing football on the M20 yesterday. Most are resigned (right) to delays

have a tachograph that tells inspectors what you have been up to. But things are easily lost or mislaid. People out there are getting away with murder."

Mr Russell, who is not a member of any union, thinks Britain is unlikely to see any French-style revolts against the political establishment. "We do not stick together. In France the police turn a blind eye because they are all in the same union."

Money, as always, provides a convenient answer. "On a good week, aye, I might get £3,000 of work in. But that's non-stop work and probably only works out at £1 for every mile driven. Then you've got your overheads - I spend £4,000 on fuel every month."

Mr Russell, who left school at 15 and grew up in Chryston, a suburb of Glasgow, said: "I wouldn't advise anyone to go into trucking now. I left Glasgow at 8am yesterday, I am supposed to be in Boulogne, then I go to Belgium. I am doing 3,500 miles a week. That's six days a week," he says. "I work a 15-hour day. That's nine hours' driving, two hours' loading, two hours' eating and two hours' emptying the trailer."

To add to his burden he and other lorry drivers face further delays and disruption next month if French transport unions carry out their threats to strike over pension pay-outs.

The move comes after negotiations between Bernard Pons, the French transport minister and the drivers' unions broke down earlier this month. The unions are planning a series of strikes in France beginning on 5 May.

Mr Russell has little faith in the British authorities' ability to resolve the mess. The Freight Transport Association delivered an over-sized invoice yesterday for 800m francs (£100m) for compensation resulting from last November's French truckers blockade to the French Embassy in London.

The bill was presented to officials by the FTA director general David Green who also delivered a letter to French President Jacques Chirac calling on him to "use all the powers available to you to prevent a re-

currence of these blockades". Stranded on the cold, hard shoulder at Folkestone, surrounded by fellow drivers running low on fuel, food, money and patience, symbolic demonstrations in London are of little

consequence to Mr Russell. He has to deal with being his own boss and the attendant hassle. On the Continent, there is a plethora of restrictions to keep up with: road tax to pay in Belgium; tolls in France; and

lorry-free times on many roads during the weekend.

"I started on my own five years ago when I brought my tractor for £55,000. If I'd known how hard it was going to be, I wouldn't have bothered."



Photographs: Andrew Buurman/AP

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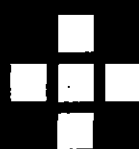
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## Fishermen firm on keeping body and sole alive

The fishing dispute blocking channel ports yesterday concerns 220 small French boats which make a living from catching sole and other fish in the channel and western approaches.

The fishermen have, somewhat belatedly, taken fright at a European Union directive, agreed by France and other European governments, which would increase the minimum mesh size of their nets.

This is part of an EU programme of conservation, applying to all EU fleets, intended to reduce the catching of young fish and lessen the pressure on disappearing stocks.

The fishermen have three complaints about the new nets. They protest that they will cost a lot to buy - about £20,000 per boat. They fear they will reduce the weight of their catches. Most of all, they complain that the nets will spare precisely the young, tender, medium-sized sole which are prized by French cooks and command the highest prices at market.

Attempts were being made last night to arrange a meeting between the fishermen's leaders and the French agriculture and fisheries minister, Philippe

John Lichfield on the question of net size and catches that has ignited the dispute

Vasseur. The minister said this was a "highly technical" matter but he was ready to meet the fishermen at any time to try to find a solution.

While this was taking place, a spokeswoman for P&O Ferries in England said the ferry companies had been granted permission by the French courts to serve injunctions on 15 fishermen blockading Calais.

"The injunctions should be served within the next few hours by French civil servants on those named individuals. If they have not moved within one hour of receiving the injunctions, they will be liable for fines of 10,000 francs (£1,100) per person per hour that they remain blocking the port."

"We are very hopeful this will bring an end to the blockade. If the fishermen do not move after the injunctions have been served, they can remain in place but the fines will mount up."

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## news

# Environment watchdog loses its teeth

Nicholas Schoon  
Environment Correspondent

Scotland's new environmental watchdog is so strapped for cash that it will not be able to monitor for disasters like the Braer oil spillage or a nuclear leak from a submarine in Holy Loch.

The agency is facing a 10 per cent cut in funding and a cash crisis because it suddenly finds itself unable to recover VAT – unlike its larger counterpart covering England and Wales.

At a meeting last week, the main board of the Government's Scottish Environment Protection Agency, which came into being last year, ordered its three area offices to make cuts to fill the £3m hole which has opened in its £28m budget.

The eastern area is worst affected, with its emergency out-of-hours service dropped. If a severe pollution incident happens on a loch or river at night or over the weekend, the agency will not be informed until the next working day begins.

The move has angered the River Tweed Commission which oversees a salmon fishing industry worth £13m a year to the Borders economy. Judith Nicol of the Commission said: "To have the agency responsible for river pollution available only during office hours surely cannot be right."

Staff training and monitoring of pollution of land, water and air is being cut back in all three areas and the agency is concerned that it may be unable to meet some of its legal obligations.

While the management has promised not to cut any of the 650 jobs for the time being, there is a freeze on filling any

A spokeswoman said monitoring of radioactivity in the waters of Holy Loch, where there was a US nuclear submarine

**With no money, the agency is being forced to break the law**

vacancies. It also regulates waste-dumping and radioactive emissions from Scotland's nuclear plants.

base, would cease. All plans to issue air pollution monitoring contracts were being scrapped. Tricia Bradley, a member of

the agency's West Region Board and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds' director in south-west Scotland, said: "In effect, they are being forced to break the law because they haven't got the money to meet their commitments."

SEPA's main board chairman Professor William Timmean said the situation was "daft". South of the border the Government's new Environment Agency covering England and Wales was able to recover VAT. Furthermore, the Scottish agency's predecessor organisations like local councils and river purification boards had been able to recover VAT.

However, Mike Thompson of Customs & Excise said SEPA "simply doesn't qualify" because it is a quango receiving its funding from the Scottish Office. He said the Treasury felt that allowing it to recover VAT would open the floodgates for others.

But the Environment Agency in England and Wales is not considered to be a quango, even though it has very similar functions and duties to its smaller Scottish sister. The larger organisation expects to reclaim over £50m VAT this year from the Treasury.

Dr Richard Dixon, head of research at Friends of the Earth Scotland, called on the Government to address the funding crisis. "Instead of carrying forward its obligation to improve the Scottish environment, the agency is facing an unfair burden which means it is having to cut back its activities," he said.

## Stunning development: devastating weapons that do not kill

Christopher Bellamy on science that makes death unnecessary

"Phasers on stun..."

The dream of being able to give an order like *Star Trek's* Captain Kirk – immobilise your opponent without killing or maiming – has long been part of science fiction and in recent years military scientists, particularly in the US, have been working to turn it into reality.

But it is all baloney, according to a report by Bradford University's Peace Studies department, published this week.

Developments in weapons technology have made it possible, in theory, to fight an entire war without anyone being killed. But in practice, say Dr Nick Lewer and Dr Steven Schofield, non-lethal weapons are just as likely to be used to overpower resistance in combination with the more conventional, lethal type, enhancing the latter's effectiveness.

The study, *Non-Lethal Weapons: A Fatal Attraction?* argues that while non-lethal weapons could be useful in "benign intervention" – peacekeeping operations, such as in Bosnia – there is an urgent need for serious debate to determine proper ground rules for their use.

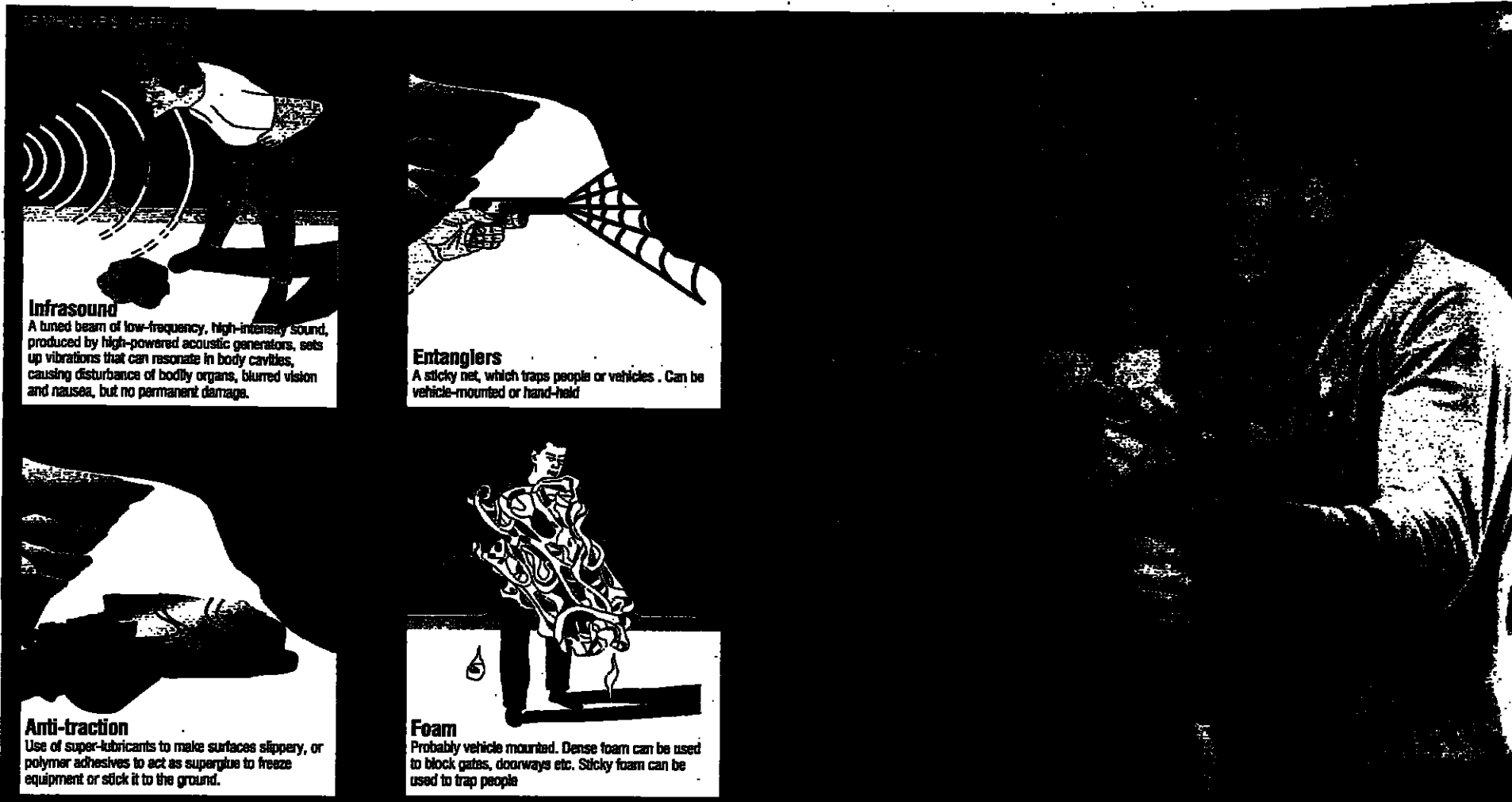
Non-lethal – or "less-than-lethal" – weapons have been around for hundreds of years. The Aztecs of central America, who needed live prisoners to sacrifice, had weapons designed to wound, not to kill.

More recently a number of non-lethal weapons have been in widespread use for the past 30 years. The most widely used are rubber or plastic bullets and CS gas, and also stun grenades.

In the last few years US companies have developed even more exotic non-lethal weapons including sticky foam and rubber balls to impede movement, sticky nets and chemical compounds to make fuel useless or to change the composition of roads. Low-frequency sound will cause a person's insides to vibrate, causing nausea and dizziness, but no permanent damage.

Other weapons, while "non-lethal", are widely detested – notably laser weapons which can blind soldiers, especially those peering through optical instruments. Weapons designed specifically to blind people were recently banned by international treaty, although those designed to smash optical instruments – which might blind people as a side-effect – were not.

A further complication is that, ironically, current international law permits only weapons designed primarily to kill, but prohibits those designed primarily to wound or disable.



**Infrasound**  
A tuned beam of low-frequency, high-intensity sound, produced by high-powered acoustic generators, sets up vibrations that can resonate in body cavities, causing disturbance of bodily organs, blurred vision and nausea, but no permanent damage.

**Entanglers**  
A sticky net, which traps people or vehicles. Can be vehicle-mounted or hand-held.

**Anti-traction**  
Use of super-lubricants to make surfaces slippery, or polymer adhesives to act as superglue to freeze equipment or stick it to the ground.

**Foam**  
Probably vehicle-mounted. Dense foam can be used to block gates, doorways etc. Sticky foam can be used to trap people.

Specifically to blind people were recently banned by international treaty, although those designed to smash optical instruments – which might blind people as a side-effect – were not.

A further complication is that, ironically, current international law permits only weapons designed primarily to kill, but prohibits those designed primarily to wound or disable.

Britain's Defence Evaluation and Research Agency is far more sceptical about non-lethal weapons, pointing out that if peacekeeping troops use them, the local parties are likely to respond with the traditional Kalashnikov. However, in difficult situations where hostages are taken, or where the identity of attackers is unclear, they may be of some limited use.

The Bradford authors said "research and development of new weapons is proceeding apace, in what amounts to an almost unseen arms race. Existing weapons conventions may be undermined as the arms industry throws up inventions that belonged in the realms of science fiction when those treaties were signed. Some allegedly non-lethal weapons rely on chemical and biological agents and are already snapping

at the heels of international law". The Bradford authors said further dangers include the use of non-lethal weapons for domestic repression – the use of electric stun batons as torture weapons is well documented and contemporary conflicts often blur the line between police and military operations. The authors called for non-lethal weapons to be assessed,

not as benign innovations but as just another type of weapon, capable of being used for good or ill. "War", as Clausewitz said, "is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will." Lethal or non-lethal, it remains an act of force.

□ *Non-Lethal Weapons: A Fatal Attraction?* Dr Nick Lewer and Dr Steven Schofield; Zed Books, London, 1997; paperback £12.95.

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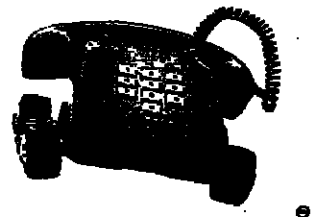
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## MoD admits Gulf War pesticides error

Nicholas Schoon

The Ministry of Defence did not check with the Government's own pesticide experts before using large quantities of dangerous organophosphate (OP) pesticides in the Gulf War.

The admission comes in a letter this week from junior agriculture minister Angela

Browning to Liberal Democrat Paul Tyler.

More than 1,000 British servicemen claim they are suffering a variety of chronic and debilitating illnesses as a result of serving in the Gulf War more than six years ago. The widespread use of OP pesticides, also believed to have made many sheep farmers se-

riously ill, is one possible cause.

Mrs Browning's letter says: "You asked whether the Ministry of Defence had contacted this department at the time of the Gulf War to obtain advice on the use of OP pesticides. We have checked the position carefully and I can confirm that no such approach was made."

Mr Tyler, MP for North

Cornwall and now the Liberal Democrat's candidate in the constituency, said yesterday: "It is mind boggling that one government ministry which was going to be responsible for the use of OPs never thought to ask questions about safety measures." Gulf veterans had "every reason to feel aggrieved", he said.

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# election '97

## Taxes: the big unanswered question

Anthony Bevins  
Political Editor

With just one week to go before polling day, the one big question that remains unanswered is: What will happen to taxes under Tony Blair or John Major?

The blunt answer is that they can be expected to go up. The Treasury Red Book, giving forecasts of tax burden, shows a steady increase up to 2002 – providing the official cover for both parties to put taxes up.

At the start of the campaign, *The Independent* posed a number of critical questions that would need to be answered, and most of them have been answered, insofar as any politician ever answers straight questions.

Would Labour take Britain into a single currency? Of course it would, though only after the same "triple-lock" safety process offered by the Tories: of Cabinet, Parliament and referendum approval.

Would Mr Ashdown keep Mr Blair in power without proportional representation? There has been no precise answer to that, though it has not been pressed too hard.

But the big remaining question is on tax – and neither the Conservatives nor Labour will give a hard answer on that – probably because most politicians and City analysts expect taxes to go up, whatever happens, and whoever wins.

While Labour has made no secret of its plans for a windfall tax on the privatised utilities, there are undoubtedly hidden agendas on both sides of the political divide. Yesterday, Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, again concentrated fire on the Tories' historical weakness for increasing VAT.

"If the Conservatives win again," he told an election press conference, "nothing will stop them increasing VAT on fuel to 17.5 per cent and extending VAT further."

John Major has shown a marked reluctance to answer questions about VAT. When *The Independent* repeatedly asked him whether he would give a commitment not to increase the rate or extend the VAT base at the start of the campaign, the Conservative leader repeatedly dodged the question.

He said: "I cannot conceive, except in the most exceptional circumstances that cannot be foreseen at the moment, that we would need to increase gener-

**Q** What will happen to taxes under Blair or Major?

**Q** If things go badly, would the Tories take us out of Europe?

**Q** Will Blair back voting reform if he wins?

**Q** Would Labour take Britain into a single currency?

**Q** Will the parties spend more on schools – and who loses?

**Q** Would Ashdown keep Blair in power without PR?

**Q** Can Labour match the Tory pledge on NHS cash?

**Q** What do the parties mean by radical reform of welfare?



Revenge of the greys: The Labour Party drew attention to John Major's record of tax rises by parading 22 men in masks through Birmingham city centre yesterday

Photograph: Mike Sewell

al tax levels in the next Parliament, given our public expenditure plans and the outlook for the economy.

"So I think that is a perfectly clear answer to the points you have made about value-added tax and subject to quite un-

expected events I'd expect that to remain the situation."

Asked for the same pledge in the 1992 election campaign, Mr Major told *The Independent*: "We have no plans and no need to extend the scope of VAT."

Labour has said firmly that it

will not extend the base of VAT to basic essentials – food, children's clothes, books and newspapers and public transport fares – and that it will reduce the rate of VAT on domestic power and fuel bills to 5 per cent, the lowest level now al-

lowed under European law. Mr Brown and Mr Blair have also made commitments that they will not increase basic 23 per cent and 40 per cent rates of income tax during the lifetime of the new parliament.

But there is no Labour com-

mitment on the tax allowances or the thresholds at which income tax is paid, although Mr Blair has said he would like to reduce the tax burden on the average family.

Only the Liberal Democrats have marked themselves out as

the party of tax and spend, with their promise to increase the basic rate of income tax by a penny in the pound to fund more spending on education and a new higher rate band of 50p for those on taxable income in excess of £100,000.

Their plans would mean that half of the 25 million income taxpayers would be worse off, but even they misleadingly said their plans to take 500,000 low-pay taxpayers out of income tax would reduce tax "for 99.5 per cent of all income taxpayers."

## Hamilton strikes at Bell with help of fax machine

Jojo Moyes

The battle between Neil Hamilton and his rival for the Cheshire seat of Tatton, Martin Bell, has moved from the realm of the fax machine with Mr Bell's campaign team accusing Mr Hamilton of conducting a "campaign by fax" and "deluging them with legal threats and complaints."

Since Mr Bell's first attempt to put forward his nomination papers last week, Mr Hamilton and his agent, Peter McDowell, have issued legal threats both in person and via Mr Hamilton's solicitors, Crookers. They have also made numerous complaints about his campaign – including the "over-enthusiastic" sitting of Mr Bell's posters.

"They're trying to demoralise us," said a spokesman for Mr Bell's office. "It's all done as a distraction because they know that our campaign has been set up from scratch. We've had to respond to everything."

Mr Bell was last week forced to re-submit his election nomination following a legal threat over his use of the term "anti-corruption" to describe himself. Mr Hamilton then complained about Mr Bell's use of the word "independent", but this was dismissed by Macclesfield's acting returning officer.

A letter received soon after from Mr Hamilton's solicitors threatens further action over Mr Bell's campaign statement. "The remark that you will 'do all [you] can to remove the stain

of corruption from public life' ... is a clear accusation that Mr Hamilton is corrupt, an accusation the gravity of which is redoubled in the context of an election campaign," the letter says. It concludes: "Our client reserves his right to commence proceedings against you claiming damages for libel following the publication of the report by Sir Gordon Downey. If, as is confidently expected, the report clears our client of the charges of corruption, the damages he will be seeking will be very substantial indeed."

Mr Hamilton himself sent one three-page letter to Mr Bell accusing him of breaking his word not to describe himself as an "anti-corruption" candidate and to run a "decent and dignified" campaign. He adds: "Will you accept that your own role in this election is but an extension of *The Guardian's* campaign against me?"

Letters from Mr McDowell, Mr Hamilton's agent, suggest that one way or another, the Battle of Knutsford Heath is not yet over. He has complained that Mr Bell's supporters are being "over-enthusiastic" in putting up posters for their man. "I think you should know that Knutsford's large and little Heath's [sic] are private property, owned by Randall Brooks," Mr McDowell states in one.

"Randall has given me permission for 'Hamilton' posters. He will definitely not be allowing 'Bell' posters."

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"Randall has given me permission for 'Hamilton' posters. He will definitely not be allowing 'Bell' posters."

## Labour film asks: Just why aren't you a Tory, Mr Blair?

Steve Boggan

Tonight, Tony Blair will be posed the question many old Labour supporters have wanted to ask him for some time: "Why aren't you a Tory?"

The question will be asked during Labour's latest election broadcast, filmed by Molly Dineen, the celebrated documentary maker, in the party's latest attempt to market Mr Blair as a better leader than John Major.

In a deliberately raw and frank 10-minute film, Ms Dineen tries to capture the essence of Tony Blair in a fly-on-the-wall style that contrasts markedly with the famously slick Hugh Hudson packaging of Neil Kinnock in 1987.

Ms Dineen was given access to Mr Blair for about five weeks, filming him at home with his children, campaigning, playing tennis and football and travelling by car and train to engagements.

The overall impression is of a young family-man desperate to get across the message that not all politicians are the same, that Britain can change and that he is the man to make it happen.

Ms Dineen said she approached Labour to make the film, rather than the other way round, and she insisted there had been no interference from the party, although she knew it would be used as an election broadcast and would, therefore, have to conform to a "broad menu".

"I went into this feeling impressed by Blair and I came out feeling impressed," she said at a preview yesterday. "I liked him very much. I especially think he is wonderful, really wonderful with his kids. I was able to film them a little, but, as a parent, he didn't want me to feature them too much. That would make them fair game."

The film includes footage of Mr Blair making tea in the kitchen of his home in Islington, north London, and has limited shots of him talking to his three children. At one point, he grins and warns them: "Lots of homework for you. Wait until David Blunkett gets hold of you!"

Peter Mandelson, Labour's campaign manager, said he hoped the broadcast would

help to cut through some of the cynicism felt towards politicians in general. "It is about Blair the man," he said. "It is not gimmicky or flashy and it has no artifice. It has no varnish. It is almost raw in its treatment of Tony Blair. You could say, we have a great asset here and let's show him off."

Only those who know him very well will know whether Ms Dineen has captured the essence of Mr Blair. However, in asking why he isn't a Tory, she elicited a response that forms the essence of his philosophy: that there is nothing wrong with ambition and success, but that your achievements are hollow if you have ignored the disadvantaged in society on the way.

### THE HURRIED VOTER'S GUIDE

#### THE CAMPAIGN

Labour's campaign day began in a TV studio with the promise of a "people's lottery" to channel money into education and health. Celebrities were on hand to endorse the party's ideas for diverting £1bn from the National Lottery Wednesday draw into health and education.

Tony Blair stayed in the news with the release of the Party Election Broadcast anticipated as "Blair: The Movie", made by the documentary maker Molly Dineen. The film will be shown on television tonight.

The Liberal Democrats marked the anniversary of the birth of William Shakespeare by pledging £1.75bn over the next five years for school books. The party's policy would amount to an extra £16,000 a year for a typical primary school and £110,000 a year for a secondary school, they said.

The Conservatives began the day with an attack on Labour's plans for pensioners, saying that measures such as the windfall tax and the removal of tax relief on private health insurance would hurt the old most.

Later, John Major was in Scotland while Brian Mawhinney, the party chairman, made waves in London by leaking a copy of Labour's "war book" – the plan for the election campaign.

Labour said the book was out-of-date and contained nothing damaging to their cause.

#### KEY ARGUMENTS

John Major warned voters in Aberdeen of the dangers of Scottish devolution under Labour. "Look in my eye and know this: I will always deal fair and true by this great nation," he told them.

Labour's lottery plans were an admission that their sums did not add up, the Health Secretary, Stephen Dorrell, said. "They are falling around looking for money to pay for commitments they have been talking about. It is an illustration of Labour's black hole," he said.

David Steel, the Liberal Democrat elder statesman, was asked on ITN's lunchtime news about his attitude to drugs. "Politicians are not in the best position to pontificate on this subject of drugs. It is largely a generational problem," he said.

Peter Mandelson, Labour's campaign manager, introduced their Party Election Broadcast about Tony Blair with the words: "This is not Blair the movie, this is Blair the man." In the film, Mr Blair says that as a boy he had never wanted to be a politician. "I thought that politicians were complete pains in the backside," Mr Blair said.

"My ambition as a lad was to play football for Newcastle United."

#### GOOD DAY

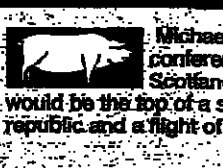


It was Jack Cunningham who organised Labour's campaign in 1992. He was let out of his kennel for the first time during the current campaign yesterday to help launch Labour's plans for the National Lottery. Mr Cunningham, shadow national heritage secretary, used the morning press conference to announce: "I am very pleased that Tony Blair is here to announce a major initiative to give more of the people's money back to them."

#### ONE TO REMEMBER

Peter Lilley, the Secretary of State for Social Security, launching an appeal to win the "grey vote", said a Conservative government would "guarantee the basic pension, go on giving more to frail and less well-off pensioners and continue to protect the living standards of pensioners". Other proposals included an insurance scheme to fund residential care for the elderly and the expansion of respite care.

#### BAD DAY



Paddy Ashdown's title of "the day – education" was blown off the agenda when he visited Newtown. Local Liberal Democrat MP David Bannell supports the building of a controversial bypass through four sites of special scientific interest and two historic battlefields, and Mr Ashdown was tailed by protesters who said Mr Bannell's view conflicted with party policy. Mr Ashdown said: "Liberal Democrats have a firm view and we stick to it."

#### HOGWASH

Michael Forsyth, Secretary of State for Scotland, said in a press conference with John Major: "Independence would be a disaster for Scotland. Labour's dog's breakfast of a proposal and its instability would be the top of a slippery slope which would end in an independent socialist republic and a flight of capital."

#### THE OTHER PARTIES

The Ulster Unionists suffered a blow when Jim Kilpatrick announced that he was defecting to the Rev Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party. He said he had switched because the DUP had gone soft on the union and was prepared to re-negotiate Northern Ireland's position within the UK.

#### MEDIA STAR

Sean Connery is as well known these days for being the provided voice-overs for several SNP political broadcasts in half a million letters appealing for votes, "signed" by the appearance on behalf of the party in this campaign, but in the fulfilling his "dearest wish" of an independent Scotland.

Dimbleby

Parties  
over La  
War 1

Greens badg  
over backing

مكتبة من الأصيل



# Dimbleby the consummate performer shows his hand



Triumphant mood: Peter Snow, David Dimbleby and Jeremy Paxman sharing a lighthearted joke with photographers on the BBC's election night set. Photograph: Tom Pison

Rob Brown  
Media Editor

Television's grand inquisitor Jeremy Paxman appeared distinctly jumpy yesterday when the tables were turned on him by media pundits invited to marvel at the BBC's Election Night studio set.

Paxman had to be prodded out of his self-styled "pen" - an interviewing lair up in the gods of the studio - by the Corporation's press handlers who insisted that he should make a smiling appearance following a recent magazine interview in which he hinted at some dissatisfaction about being kept in David Dimbleby's shadow.

"Listen, I was not disappointed. It was what we call in the trade a joke. J.O.K.E." he told me when I did my best Paxman impression and raised this vexed topic.

Later, loosening up slightly, he described himself as "the fool to Dimbleby's King Lear" and said he would dread being asked to play the big serious anchorman role at a future election. "It seems to be rather complicated."

It sure does. The BBC is hailing its Election Night special as the biggest broadcasting event in its history. It will certainly be among the longest - running from 9.55pm to at least midnight on 2 May.

It took 16 lorries to deliver and three days to erect the silver-hued tubular steel "theatre-in-the-round" set in studio 1 at BBC Television Centre, which will serve as the hub of the operation, housing 120 computer terminals, 200 monitors, 100 telephones, 30 miles of video cable and wiring and backed up by 80 outside broadcast units dotted throughout the British Isles.

Although the cameras will be trained on Dimbleby and his fellow presenters, plus the delighted and dejected politicians they lure into Paxman's lair, viewers will also see the

camera crews, the results' team and computer back-up people.

"They will all be visible so that licence-payers can see their money is being well-spent," said Peter Horrocks, editor of *Newsnight* and *Election '97*, who was keen to point out that the cost of the coverage would be about £2.5m, roughly the same as in 1992.

But there was no sign of skimping. The lavish set is a cross between the Starship Enterprise and a Roman amphitheatre. Dimbleby averred that it reminded him of the Cirque du Soleil, a famous Canadian circus troupe, at the Royal Albert Hall. "You expect acrobats in leotards to appear," he joked. He may be the circus-master, but he will also be performing, as ever, a double-act with Peter Snow, who was like a child in a toy shop yesterday demonstrating his new virtual swingometer, live 3-D graphics and zappy election night computer games.

One sequence - already tested on the Wirral South by-election result programme - will depict the parties' battle-buses either roaring ahead or disappearing into a watery ditch, depending on their performance at the poll. Another will show key target seats being smashed up on screen if the incumbent is unseated.

"Visually the graphics are the most exciting," Snow enthused. "They'll be able to tell the story as never before."

The story the BBC wants to tell on 2 May is that it has once again triumphed on the ratings front. In its 1992 Election Night coverage the Beeb drew 8 million viewers, twice as many as ITV. By 2am its audience had fallen to 4.5 million, but this was three times as large as its commercial rival.

"I'd be disappointed if our coverage this time round wasn't as popular," said Mr Horrocks, issuing a further solemn pledge to licence-payers: "It's long, but it's not going to be boring."

## Parties battle over Labour's 'War Book'

Christian Wolmar  
and Colin Brown

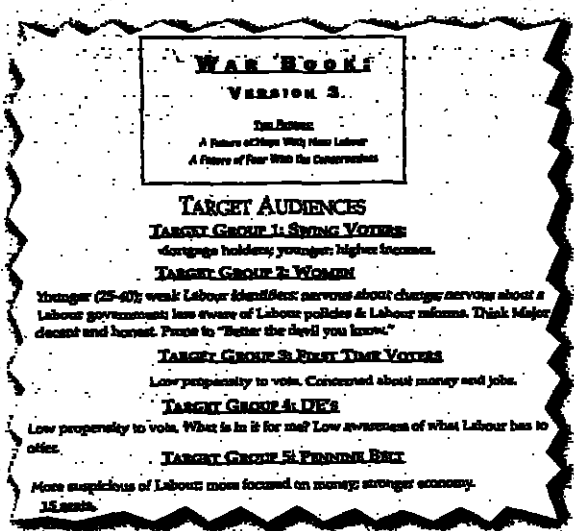
Labour's battle plan for the election, revealing its assessment of both its and the Tories' weaknesses and strengths, was leaked by the Tories yesterday, provoking a row over its importance and relevance.

Brian Mawhinney, Conservative chairman, said the document, "War Book Version 3" "reflects very closely what has been happening over the last six months in what is quite clearly the most cynical political campaign ever seen in British politics." It correctly identified Labour's own perceived weaknesses, suggesting the Tories' decision to concentrate on Europe was a result of Labour accepting that it was seen as likely to sell out to Brussels.

Labour spin-doctors appeared unconcerned about its publication but Dr Mawhinney grabbed the evening headlines, knocking off Labour's announcement about the Lottery. Labour also hinted that it had similar documents relating to the Tories' plans but a source said: "We would not be stupid enough to publish them."

Tory candidates are being issued with extracts from the 30-page dossier to sharpen their campaigning on the doorstep by showing that Labour secretly feared it was weak on the "hidden left", the up of Tony Blair's team, and being evasive.

However, Dr Mawhinney failed to point out that the Labour analysis identified Labour's strengths as "Tony Blair - young, strong and dynamic leadership"; and education, and the NHS were seen as "winning" issues for Labour. Labour sources last night said



Poll position: Excerpts from the leaked document

it was a year-old document, it was not their current election plan, and denied it was a summary of what Labour said about itself. Labour said it listed Tory claims about their own strengths.

The War Book lists both parties' strategies and plans, and outlines in detail Labour's plan for the five months in the run-up to the election. While much in the document, which is at least six months old, has happened as predicted, or has been announced subsequently by Labour, some lines of attack have been dropped by Labour and others have been added.

For example, a page referring to Tory pledges says: "You will pay to visit your school; you will pay more for books; you will pay VAT on books; there will be more crime; guns and knives still legal; you will pay for water through a meter." This line of attack was prepared in anticipation of announcements by the

Tories. But there is no mention of things like privatisation of pensions, which clearly surprised Labour.

There is also a fascinating reference to the 15 key seats in the Pennine belt, where internal Labour polling suggests local people are more concerned with tax and less bothered about health and education than in the rest of the country. Labour's weaknesses are seen as money, fear of Labour, "what do they stand for?" "why are they evasive?" break-up of Britain and Labour councils.

Conservative strengths are the economy (inflation, interest rates and economic competence), patriotism (Europe, the Union), Mr Major (decent, honest) and continuity. Their weaknesses are "17 years too long", "for the few, not the many", Mr Major's weak leadership, division/disintegration, betrayal/trust, tax, NHS, education, crime.

## Greens badger Ashdown over backing for bypass

Barrie Clement

Paddy Ashdown attempted to spend quality time with a dormouse and a pantomime cow yesterday. Amid eco-heckling from Green Party activists and interjections from the ensatz bovine creature, Mr Ashdown tried to explain his party's support for the Newbury by-pass.

The front end of the cow was protesting over the construction of the road, as indeed was the back end. The Liberal Democrat leader addressed the head of the cow, arguing that while the by-pass would have an environmental impact, it was in-

finately preferable to the current state of affairs. The Liberal Democrats' own polling had shown 87 per cent of residents supported the decision.

The arguments were having little impact on the beast and Mr Ashdown was advised by a party activist that he was talking to the wrong end of the animal.

The cow confided to *The Independent* that it was an eco-criminal, having been arrested for trespassing on the by-pass construction site. As a condition of bail, the cow, or Rockin' Rosie, as she called herself, regularly attended the local police station.

The dormouse, which took its place among a dozen eccentric protesters outside Greenham Court primary school, felt even more aggrieved. "Let's have a debate. Let the badger have his say," said a magnanimous Mr Ashdown to the rodent.

"I'm not a badger. I'm a dormouse," came the reply. "Most of my bat and badger friends were killed during the by-pass construction. I am very, very lonely."

The protesters tried to stop Mr Ashdown entering the school but were brushed aside by an unlikely alliance of police and Liberal Democrats.

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# 'Donnygate' affair spawns its own anti-sleaze hero



Confidante candidate: Neil Swan, who is standing on an anti-sleaze Labour ticket, chatting to Doncaster voters yesterday. Photograph: David Rose

Christian Wolmar

Labour faces its own anti-sleaze candidate in Doncaster, which has achieved national notoriety with a local government scandal of growing proportions.

Neil Swan, a former Labour Doncaster candidate, is standing on an "anti-sleaze Labour" ticket against Kevin Hughes, a junior Labour whip in the last Parliament and also a former Doncaster councillor.

The Donnygate affair, which has been dubbed recently as "the worst local government scandal since the Poulson affair", first came to light in January after the district auditor revealed he was questioning the validity of trips abroad and extravagant "working" lunches by councillors.

Earlier this week, it was revealed that the police are

widening their inquiry to include land deals, contracts with a security firm and various other financial deals and the police are now setting up an office in the town hall.

Mr Swan said he wants to put pressure on the national party and to act as a focus for local concern about corruption at the council. A New Labour supporter, he wants to draw the national party's attention to what has been happening for many years in Doncaster.

Mr Swan was a councillor between 1987 and 1990 and fell foul of what he calls the ruling "Mafia" on the council. He said: "It started at the first meeting I went to, when I asked a few questions about the annual report, they didn't like that."

An inner caucus of leading councillors, based originally around the National Union of

Mineworkers, the miners' community group, has long made the key decisions about what happens on Doncaster council, and Mr Swan fell foul of them: "I discovered their existence by accident. I was driving, a bit early, to a meeting, and I saw this bunch of councillors standing outside the local T&G office. They had obviously tried to get in for a meeting but the caretaker had locked them out. When they noticed me, they started jumping over hedges and trying to hide behind the building. It was hilarious."

Thanks to a grant of £7,000 from the People's Trust, a fund created with a £2m donation by Mohamed Al Fayed, Mr Swan has an office, a fax and even a hired van. He hopes that there will be some money left over to sponsor candidates in the 1998 council elections, if the clean-

up of the council, which has started through the resignation of several leading councillors, has not been completed.

Out on the stump, Mr Swan drops into a group of women who live in terraced housing opposite a development site. They have complained about not receiving any information as roadworks and shops appeared opposite them, with no warning.

Two of them, Heather Wilson and Susan Arksey, have been badgering the council for two years but their letters got lost or they receive patronising replies. Mrs Wilson said: "We started taking in our letters to the council to make sure they got there, but they refused to give us a receipt for them."

In the market in Thorn, one of the small towns which make up much of the Doncaster North constituency, Mr Swan is

greeted by supporters. He has become a repository for all complaints about the council, but there is, too, deep embarrassment about Donnygate.

"I've seen these councillors plotting in the local club. They're like a coven of male witches," says Frank Dallas, a pensioner, who is angry about recent figures showing some councillors getting more than £20,000 a year in expenses.

Yet, local Tories are surprisingly uninterested in exploiting the scandal. Peter Kennerley, a candidate from Central Office casting - a City lawyer and Wandsworth councillor - reckons that Doncaster people will not react well to an outsider raising local sleaze: "This is still the people's republic of South Yorkshire. People are very dependent on the council and don't dare criticise it."



by Anonymous

It was Wednesday, the polls had been bad - but Bobby was not wobbling. Not that much ever wobbled with Bobby. His lean frame and bony features were not suited to it. Anything wobbly was kept well out of sight.

"A vague but passing piranha who asked about the survey showing a sudden drop in his party's lead, 'full of technical deficiencies.' And in a way it was good that this poll was quite so bad. When, by the end of the week, the others came out showing a better picture, the story would be all about the Candidate's recovery and the Grey Man's gloom."

Meanwhile, momentum was vital. The party must show no signs of flagging, no let-up in its assault on the eyes and ears of the nation's commentators. They'd made that mistake in 1992, and were not going to make it again - not on his watch.

So today he had had no less than three events to attend to, and it was still only four in the afternoon. The most exciting - held in a London television studio in front of a live audience of piranhas and tame punters - had launched a populist initiative involving giving lottery money to things that folk liked. Politically it was the perfect deal, no-one lost and everybody gained. It was a win-win deal, with guaranteed publicity.

As usual the Prodiges had done a celebrity trawl and uncovered a former Olympic athlete to endorse the proposals on education, and yet another hugely successful middle-aged woman - this time to back the plans for health clubs for all. Bobby was getting rather fond of these confident matrons, whose capacity to sell jobs and sex advice to the women of Britain had emboldened them to go on to public platforms and speak earnestly about the politics/spirituality interface.

One had fallen for the Candidate because of the way in which he "dialogued" with people. But the fairy on the Christmas tree was a special guest appearance from the world-famous Oscar-winning film director, whose last speech had been the one in which he had accepted all those awards on that vast stage in California. When the director had come to the rostrum, Bobby had half expected to be mentioned in a long list of those to be thanked for this wonderful success - "and, finally, to my



friend Bobby, without whom none of this would have been possible."

Event two was his own show, unveiling the movie about the Candidate, shot by the award-winning woman documentary director. After this campaign, he thought, he might have difficulty in mixing with people who had not actually won awards. What were you if you had no BAFTAs, Oscars, or Olympic Golds on your sideboard?

The tankful of piranhas was surprisingly receptive to what he had described as "the Candidate, almost raw." Especially since "almost raw" had actually meant "in the kitchen". But Bobby liked the word "raw". Only the yellow-tied former Trotskyist had been hostile, determined to discover whether the documentary woman had been prevented from filming in other places ("like where?" he thought, "the loo?").

It was even calmer half an hour later when Mr Brown and Red Dawn gave a little press conference about VAT Bobby stood at the back in characteristic pose, his left hand resting in the crook of his right arm, his right hand swivelling at the wrist to pull at his nose, he waved dismissively at questions from the Daily Telegraph, or to shield his mouth when making pertinent observations to Big Al, who was looming just behind him.

The most exhausting thing was never quite knowing what the media flock would do next. He knew that a considerable part of his reputation rested on an almost superstitious belief on the part of the Candidate's office in his capacity to affect the sudden startling-like wheeling and changes of direction that these gregarious animals exhibited from time to time. But it was never as simple as that. Sudden moods would arise, unforeseen mistakes would be made. Only last night, in middle of his moment of passion, the untaxed Candidate (usually a model of precision) had got his lines mixed up, and had inadvertently watered down one of the few commitments the party actually had. It had taken 10 hours to sort things out.

But he was relatively happy now, and able at leisure to reflect on two things he had never before noticed. The first was that Mr Brown's arms were rather short. The second was that the campaign was rather long. Then his sleep went off.

One middle-aged woman had fallen for Bobby because of the way he dialogued with the people

"No political party is in favour of homelessness. No one sets out to encourage it. Unfortunately, the policies sometimes have that effect. It's true it has not featured in the election campaign so far. The truth is it is not a vote-winner. That is absolutely wrong, but unfortunately it is so." - Tony Banks

## QUOTES OF THE DAY

Scotland may well decide the outcome. - John Major

"Peter doesn't have to have his reality made virtual. He's his own reality." - Peter Horrocks, editor of the BBC's election night programme, talking about Peter Snow and his 3D swingometer

"Politicians are not in the best position to pontificate on this subject of drugs. It is largely a generational problem." - Sir David Steel, Liberal Democrat elder statesman

"Everywhere I go in the world, people want to know about Scotland and why we tolerate our affairs being run by someone else's government." - Sean Connery in a letter to 500,000 voters urging them to support the Scottish National Party.

Compiled by Ben Summers and Sam Coates

## Etonian turns back on old school

Barrie Clement

Old Etonian David Rendel, Liberal Democrat candidate for Newbury, yesterday said his three sons had had a better education at the local comprehensive than he had received at the country's most prestigious public school.

Mr Rendel, the party's local government spokesman in the last parliament, said he had been educated in a "very strange and unusual way". Speaking at Greenham Court primary school, in Newbury, also attended by his children, Mr Rendel said: "The education they received here was rather better than the one I got."

"They have seen more of the world. They grew up with normal people in a way I did not. They are more worldly wise, they know their way in the world better than I did."

Mr Rendel, who was accompanying Paddy Ashdown on a visit to the school, said the facilities at Eton, where the fees are £13,410 a year, were very good. "If we could have those advantages in the state sector, who knows what could be achieved?" Mr Rendel's sons are 18, 16 and 13. Asked by *The Independent* whether his education had made him a strange and unusual person, he replied: "Any child of any politician will find their father rather strange."



Rendel: "Strange" schooling

Mr Rendel is defending a 22,000 by-election majority, but his seat could be vulnerable to his Conservative challenger because of the boundary changes. The headmaster of Eton kept his own counsel about the comments of the school's former pupil.

Later Mr Ashdown spoke in an "open circle" in Bath on education attended by teachers, lecturers, students and parents. Of the 23 guests who attended the meeting to give their views and hear those of Mr Ashdown, not one spoke in favour of selection at schools.

Asked what they would do if they could make one decision as Secretary of State for Education, many supported a reduction in class sizes.

The Liberal Democrat leader told the meeting that although all three parties claimed to emphasise education, the Conservatives had only devoted one press conference to the subject.

## Millbank tendency gives words whole new meaning

Frank Abrams  
Political Correspondent

Labour's Millbank tendency have done it again. Now they are even tinkering with the English language.

Not content with rewriting their party's constitution and many of its policies, Tony Blair's aides have now turned their attentions to rewriting the political lexicon.

Responding to the findings of focus groups, Labour is increasingly controlling the language its candidates use. Using a strategy designed both to reassure and to entice voters, the party is developing a whole new lexicon of its own.

Even on the campaign trail, would-be MPs regularly ring their party's communications headquarters in London to check the "line" on a particular topic.

Sentences containing words such as "strong", "opportunity", and "challenge" often result from these conversations.

"Millennium" is a very new Labour word, too. It conveys both the excitement of a new era and the certainty of 1,000 years of history.

The *Independent's* database shows 55 instances of Tony Blair's name being mentioned in the same article as word since the election campaign

### Parties' lexicon for campaign usage

New Labour	Conservative	Drift
Words	Yes	Conflict
Core	Destiny	Surrender
Foundation	Victory	Inexperience
Security	Citizen	Dictate
Millennium	Community	Inexperience
Challenge	Pludge	Rush headlong
Opportunity	Passion	Weakness
Modern	Reborn	Threat
Young	Destiny	Divide
New	Transformation	Naked
Stakeholder	Aspiration	Diminish
Confidence	Ambition	Nation state
Strength	Tony Words	One nation
Contract	Danger	History
Reward		
Maturity		

began, while John Major comes up just 34 times in the same context. Likewise "regenerate", "vision" and "destiny".

New Labour is clearly keen to portray itself as a party full of young, vigorous politicians but not to let any hint of inexperience slip through.

Tony Blair has been connected with the word "young" 471 times since the election campaign began, while John Major has had just 379 links. Mr Blair and the word "modern" have been paired 169 times, while the Prime Minister and the same word have been paired only 124 times.

Passion, too, is the territory

of Labour in the 1997 campaign. Mr Blair and passion have been mentioned together 45 times, while Mr Major has clocked up just 22 mentions.

"Stakeholder society," once a key phrase for Tony Blair, seems to have taken a dive during the election campaign. It appears the focus groups may have reported vagueness on what the phrase actually meant.

The Conservatives' language has a dual message, too. They aim to spread fear about what a Labour government might mean, and they want to press home the message that Britain is already a safe, comfortable place to live.

Tory words on a Labour future include "danger", "drift", "conflict" and "surrender", while "our great nation", "booming" and "you can only be sure" help to reassure.

Meanwhile, "sovereignty" and "nation state" are making a shaky bid for prevalence in the light of the party's debate over Europe.

John Underwood, the former director of communications for the Labour Party and now a senior partner in Clear Communications, does not believe the development of such a political patois is surprising.

What is new is the way the words are chosen to appeal to about 250,000 "switchers and squeezers" in key marginal seats, he says.

There's a micro-campaign being waged in pursuit of these quarters of a million people. This language is designed for them, Mr Underwood said.

Austin Mitchell, the Labour MP for Great Grimsby, is not impressed with the gale of paper which blows out of his fax machine every day with instructions.

"What I want is ideas for issues to put over and answers to the kind of questions that come from the electors. This is just endless regurgitation of the leadership's speeches," Mr Mitchell said.

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Stephen Goodwin reports on the tussle for votes in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland



Food for thought: Charles Kennedy, Liberal Democrat MP for Ross, Skye and Inverness, enjoying a tea and scone break on the campaign trail

Photograph: Brian Harris

## Kennedy fights for his northern life

The notion of a Highlands and Islands group of Labour MPs wielding a kind of crofters' block vote at Westminster sounds at first like revolutionary talk brought on by too many single malts downed in front of a peat fire.

But perhaps not. Labour candidates in the west of Scotland believe this election offers the best opportunity for decades of reviving the home-grown radical movement which grew out of the crofters' uprisings of the 1880s. Now, as then, land reform would be top of its agenda.

Two of the putative group are defending seats held in the last Parliament, Calum Macdonald in the Western Isles and Brian Wilson, Labour's campaign coordinator.

Lying south of the Clyde, Mr Wilson's Cunningham North constituency could hardly be de-

scribed as "Highland", though it does include the Isle of Arran. He is, however, a driving force behind the group, a founder of Skye's *West Highland Free Press*, who could be a voice in a Labour cabinet.

"There has always been a distinctive Highland agenda - land ownership and transport are the main issues - but it is very rare for us to have an opportunity to push it to national prominence," Mr Wilson said.

The last time the Highlands had two Labour MPs and their own party in office, the big spending Highland and Islands Development Board was set up. There has been no comparable initiative since.

The three other potential group members are in Liberal Democrat constituencies. James Hendry, an Inverness solicitor, probably stands least chance. He is up against the vet-

eran Bob MacLennan in Caithness, Sutherland, and Easter Ross, though interestingly when Mr MacLennan won the seat in 1966 it was for Labour. He switched to the SDP in the 1980s.

Then there is David Stewart, a social worker and councillor in "too-close-to-call" Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber. The retirement of Sir Russell Johnston has left the seat a four-way marginal on paper but most pundits think the SNP's Fergus Ewing, solicitor son of Winnie "Madame Ecosse" Ewing, is edging ahead.

Most Labour hopes are pinned on Dennis Munro, front man for the Gaelic rock band Runrig, who is challenging Charles Kennedy in Ross, Skye and Inverness West.

Boundary changes have cost Mr Kennedy natural voters in East Ross and added Labour

wards in Inverness, the SNP's Margaret Paterson is likely to pick up votes in her home area of Dingwall, and there are malicious whispers that after 14 years as an engaging television star for a party unlikely to gain power he might prefer to concentrate on broadcasting. His dismissal of the rumour is unprintable, nevertheless he does not seem convinced by the "Oh you'll be okay" confidence he hears on doorsteps.

Mr Munro is not only a native of Skye, with nearly a quarter of the seat's 56,000 voters, but has cult status among the young right across Scotland. Some 50,000 watched the band at an open air concert by Loch Lomond in 1991.

Watching him argue Labour's case at cottage doors on the island of Raasay, off Skye, in his black coat and boots, he looks like an Amish preacher come to

call. His message certainly has a religious fervour.

Just as he believes Runrig's music has given Gaelicdom a greater cultural confidence, now, aged 42, he wants to help empower the Islands and Highlands politically.

"We have been in a backwater politically for too long. The Liberals may appear inoffensive and quasi-independent but over 30 years they have proved utterly ineffectual," he said.

For inspiration, Mr Munro had only to look across the

Sound of Raasay to Braes, on Skye, where a memorial commemorates the last battle fought on British soil.

In 1882 crofters incensed by rents fought a pitched battle with a squad of sheriff's men. Several people were imprisoned and fined at Inverness. But though the battle was lost, the campaign was a success. Crofters secured rights of tenure and for a time elected their own MPs - a piece of misty-eyed history which just might repeat itself.

## Labour's lottery to help the NHS

Anthony Bevins  
Political Editor

A £1bn "People's Lottery" fund to support education and health projects would be set up by a Labour government, Tony Blair said yesterday.

The Labour leader joked that while his party could not guarantee that people would win the lottery, he would guarantee that their money went to the causes they really cared about.

He told an election press conference that the fund would be created from the proceeds of the current National Lottery mid-week draw over five years, and would be used to pay for new projects that fell outside services normally financed by taxation. "It will not substitute for what the taxpayer does," he said. "It will add to what people get."

But Virginia Bottomley, Secretary of State for National Heritage, claimed that the Labour scheme would threaten the success of the National Lottery, increase bureaucracy and undermine the concept that it should only fund projects additional to those already met by central government.

"Labour pledge the same money over and over again to different projects," she said. "The only clear thing is that their figures do not add up and it would all end in tears."

Illustrating the type of projects that would benefit, Mr Blair said some of the cash would be used to make sure that teachers had the skills to deal with computers in the classroom; finance children's after-school learning programmes; and set up healthy living centres. Labour was also planning to use the "People's Lottery" fund to finance a national talent endowment scheme for science,

technology and the arts, fostering new talent for the future. The endowment scheme, supported at the press conference by Rachel Portman, Oscar-winning composer of the music for the film *Emma*, and Anthony Minghella, director of the Oscar-winning film *The English Patient*, could be earning copyright revenues by 2001.

Miriam Stoppard, the writer and broadcaster, backed the plans for healthy-living centres; a network offering fitness checks and routines, and advice on diet and health, located in high streets, shopping centres and leisure centres.

Labour's national heritage spokesman, Jack Cunningham, said: "The lottery is very effective at raising cash, but people believe more of it should go to the things they think are important and which make a real difference to their lives."

"If the benefits are to be fully realised there must be a new, better approach to the allocation of the funds. We must ensure a more effective and equitable system for lottery awards. Awards such as £13m for the Churchill papers and financial support for Eton College caused public outrage."

Dr Cunningham also said that there were enormous regional disparities in the allocation of lottery money, and, under Labour, existing funding bodies would be expected to demonstrate commitment to a geographically-fair distribution.

Existing rules worked against less prosperous areas and communities, he said. They would be made more flexible and Labour would also set up "Community Chests" across the country, enabling more people at a local level to influence the distribution and allocation of funds.

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### political shorts

#### Anti-gun lobby turns its fire on the Tories

The anti-gun lobby will today throw its weight firmly against the Conservatives as the banning of handguns becomes a party political issue. Ann Pearson, of the Snowdrop Campaign, along with members of the Gun Control Network and representatives of the Labour and Liberal Democrat parties, will share a platform to attack Tory views on firearms.

The campaigners against handguns had initially sought to be apolitical as they attempted to bring about a ban in the wake of the Dunblane massacre. The change in stance follows a survey by the Gun Control Network of parliamentary candidates views on a total handgun ban. Gill Marshall-Andrews, who chairs the group, said: "If it's important to you that we make this country safer and ban all handguns, then don't vote Tory."

Meanwhile, Mrs Pearson said that the Snowdrop Campaign, which played a major part in bringing about tighter firearms legislation after Dunblane, would officially disband on the day of the election.

#### 007 goes to SNP's aide

Realistic enough at least to know that letters from politicians go straight in the bin, the Scottish National Party has sent its supporters and waverers an appeal signed by the party's best-known overseas supporter, the actor Sean Connery. "Everywhere I go in the world people want to know about Scotland and why we tolerate our affairs being run by someone else's government," says Mr Connery, a resident of Marbella in Spain.

Some 500,000 copies of the letter are being sent out. The 66-year-old actor, a former James Bond whose visage peers from the page, says it is his "dearest wish to see Scotland free", but the Nationalists are keeping silent over whether he might join the campaign in person. Stephen Goodwin

#### PM's vow to Scots fishermen

John Major promised Scottish fishermen that he would stand firm against Europe until the problem of quota-hoppers had been resolved. He gave three pledges to Scotland's fishermen in a letter to Robert Allan, chief executive of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, during his campaign trip to the north east of Scotland. Meanwhile, Henry McLeish, Labour's Scottish campaign co-ordinator, claimed that only his party could fight successfully for the reform of the European Common Agricultural Policy to help Scottish farmers. Sam Coates

#### Bookies cut winning odds

William Hill has cut the odds on the Tories forming a government with an overall majority from 15/2 to 6/1, while the odds on them being the largest single party have narrowed from 9/2 to 7/2. Labour remains favourite, though its odds have lengthened from 1/8 to 1/6 to be the largest party and from 1/6 to 2/9 to win an overall majority.

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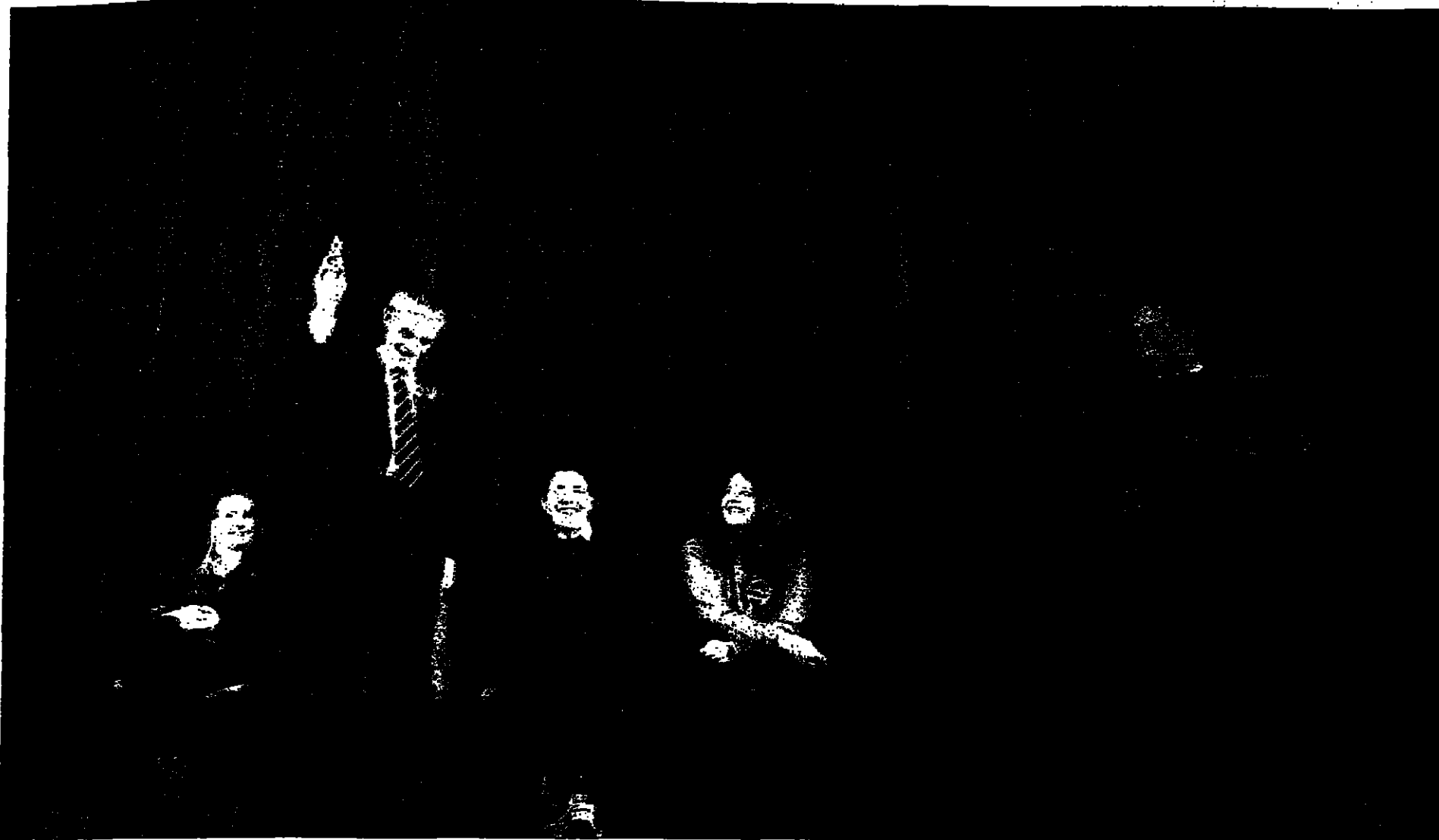
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# Poll fever inspires new class



Youth appeal: (left to right) Higgins (Lib Dem), Rollason (new Labour), Aers (old Labour) and Matheson (Tory) at the Durham Johnston school hustings

Photograph: John Voos

Young voters at Durham Johnston comprehensive school have a unique election opportunity many of their adult counterparts might welcome.

Among the four candidates standing in this Durham comprehensive mock-election are representatives of old and new Labour, battling it out with each other as well as with their Liberal Democrat and Tory rivals. The divisions so carefully plastered over at national level broke apart at Durham Johnston when politics student Rosa Aers, 16, offered to stand for Labour only if she could stick to her Bennite principles and propose re-nationalisation, uni-

## Lucy Ward finds political passion stirring in the sixth-form

lateral nuclear disarmament and a decent minimum wage. "We felt we ought also to have a speaker who was more representative of new-Labour thinking," explains John Dumford, the head teacher, and 18-year-old Jonathan Rollason, a national debating champion, was roped in to fill the gap.

New Labour's man, with his outsize red rose, suit and tie and winning oratory, was clearly born for the hustings, but he is the only one of the four sixth-formers living in a safe Labour seat who has no firm political convictions.

Tony Blair, who once lived within the school's catchment area, but who attended Durham Chorister prep school just across the city, could still win this waverer's general-election vote, but so might Paddy Ashdown.

Lib Dem candidate Rebecca Higgins, 17, is too young to vote for real but has supported her party "ever since I can remember". At the lectern in front of 230 attentive sixth-formers yesterday, she urged: "If everyone who agreed with the Liberal Democrats voted for us we would have a chance."

Claire Matheson, 17, admits that as a teenage Tory she is a rare find in the staunchly Labour North-East. "Only the Conservatives will offer opportunities for all, including the chance of a good education and a job," she proclaimed, adeptly brushing aside questions on party divisions over Europe.

The mock election at Durham Johnston, one of more than 3,600 schools nationwide to hold its own poll, has succeeded in stirring political passion in the classrooms where the national version has not, students say.

The corridors are plastered with poster-slogans: "Twenty years ago the North-East had mines, now it has unemployment," says old Labour, while the Tories take a break from negative campaigning with "dynamic - the party and the candidate".

The hustings each morning this week have been lively, with candidates pinned down on Europe, tax and education, and - in a bold departure from traditional political practice - attempting to answer questions. "The school can act as a counterweight to the national

apathy and raise interest in the election," says Mr Dumford.

So, who from Durham Johnston would have won the key to Number 10? Jonathan romped home by a 25-vote margin over old Labour, and bringing up the rear, was the valiant Tory candidate, Claire, with 27 votes.

Third came Rebecca, who knows her party will not be governing on 2 May, and second was Rosa, aspiring Labour MP and self-confessed "school-communist", who says it is politicians who behave like schoolchildren. "They bicker and fight like little boys in the playground. It is as if they have forgotten they are running the country."

## HOW I WILL VOTE: MICHAEL WINNER

### In the real world it's very difficult to be different

#### How will you vote?

For the first time in my life I am on the undecided list.

#### Why?

I am a natural Conservative voter, and I oppose the idea of too much state interference and central control. But on the face of it we now have two Conservative parties, one led by Blair, one led by Major. Blair's one may not turn out to be as Conservative as it now appears, whereas Major's is so utterly divided it does not deserve a vote.

#### What issues affect the way that you will vote?

If, as Clinton said, the economy is everything, then why should anyone throw out Major? Whether he should be given the credit, or whether it happened by accident, the country is in extraordinarily good shape.

The greatest issue today, however, is Europe. But I don't think anybody knows what a future in Europe holds, or understands it fully. The Conservative Party are divided. It is unclear what their policy is on Europe as they are frightened to say if they have one. But I don't think Tony Blair is going to be so different. In the real world it's very difficult to be different.

#### How does living in Kensington and Chelsea affect the way you vote?

If it wasn't for Alan Clark, I'd certainly be voting for Tony Blair. I like Major and Blair both personally. I think they are terribly decent, cheerful people. Blair must be given credit for the extraordinary transformation he pulled off in the Labour Party. On the other hand, I also like Alan Clark. The more eccentrics we get in the House of Commons, the better, so I lean towards him as a human being.

The bottom line is that whatever I vote in my constituency the outcome is as good as decided. So I'm voting purely for my own conscience.

Sometimes I've forgotten to vote. But I've decided this time I will, because I feel, however pathetic, like having my 60 millionth of a per cent recorded. There's the added incentive that the polling station is in the Leyton House Museum, round the corner from my house. They've just put up a few nice pictures, so I may as well go and have a look at them.

#### Which politicians do you admire?

Apart from Alan Clark for his oddness, I also like Kenneth



Michael Winner: Wants more eccentrics in the Commons

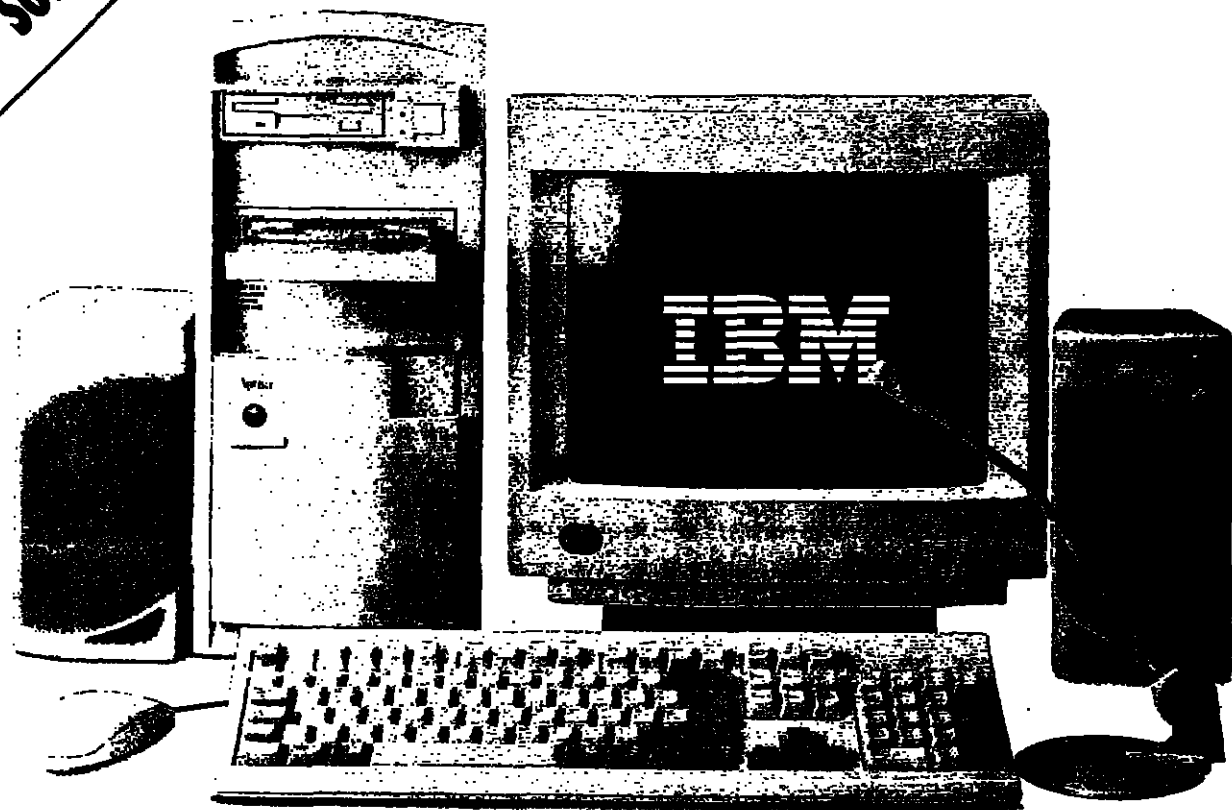
Clarke. I think he's done a terrific job. I admire John Major and Tony Blair, but I don't think you could get very excited about any of the others.

#### When did you first acquire an interest in politics?

At school I voted for Clement Attlee. Together with Thatcher, they were the great prime ministers of this century. Thereafter I remained a natural Conservative, sometimes voting, sometimes not. So I'm not what could be called a dedicated Conservative. If this time round I do vote for Labour and they then become extremely left-wing, I and many others will feel very let down. If they do get voted in, it is because they are essentially watered down Conservatives.

Interview by Sam Coates

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مكتبة الأمل





# EMU membership: European Commission says 13 countries, including Britain, will make the grade

## Italy fails first test to join single currency

Sarah Helm  
Brussels

The European Commission yesterday declared Italy unfit to join the single currency, based on present economic forecasts, causing sparks to fly in Brussels and creating political ructions in Rome.

The row over Italy's failure so far to make the Euro-grade gave a foretaste of the bitter divisions which will break out across Europe when the final rulings on which countries qualify to join the single currency are made next year.

Prior to release of the data, the Italian government, headed by Romano Prodi, who has staked his future on bringing Italy into the single currency at the launch, was widely reported to have exerted pressure on the Commission to alter the figures.

Emma Bonino, the Italian commissioner for consumer affairs, protested vigorously over the Commission's findings.

On other fronts, however, the Commission's outlook was surprisingly optimistic. Figures showed that a total of 13 countries - including Germany, France, Britain and Spain - will meet the key economic test, which requires countries to bring their public deficits down to 3 per cent of gross domestic product.

This was many more than indicated by separate forecasts yesterday from the International Monetary Fund. In its

view, seen as far more realistic by the financial markets, France, Germany, the UK and Spain will also just miss the 3 per cent target.

There is slower progress on the reduction of debt in the Commission's forecast, but it clearly believes its optimistic new growth forecast of 2.4 per cent for this year will help most countries turn the corner.

Both Spain and Portugal are also expected to make the grade, although many analysts predict that it would be politically impossible for Europe to refuse entry to Italy, a founder member, while accepting Spain and Portugal.

Yesterday's Commission figures were awaited with unprecedented interest as the deadline for decision-time on economic and monetary union draws nearer. Decisions on which countries qualify will be based on economic figures for this year, and will be made at a special council by heads of state and government in May next year, ahead of the launch on January 1st 1999.

Britain, which is expected to have brought its deficit down to 2.9 per cent of GDP this year, is now highly likely to qualify, unless other states continue to insist that the requirement to be part of the exchange rate mechanism be strictly enforced.

During the increasingly Euro-sceptic debate characterising the British election cam-

paign, both main parties argue that Britain must continue to "wait and see" before deciding whether to join EMU at the launch, giving the electorate the impression that decision-time for Britain still lies some way off.

However, as yesterday's announcement in Brussels reaffirmed, most other member states are already lining up at the starting gate.

Under the Maastricht Treaty, Britain must notify its partners of whether it wishes to be considered for membership of the EMU by the end of this year.

Any suggestion that Europe is "fudging" the convergence criteria in the final months will be seized on by British Eurosceptics as further grounds to stay outside and will also spur conflict between other member states.

Yesterday Yves Thibault de Silguy, the economic commissioner, rejected suggestions that there had been any "tinkering or trading" with the figures, and presented his experts' findings as proof that Europe was now "well on the road" to the EMU launch.

However, suspicions about the way the Commission has calculated its forecasts remain. Yesterday Mr de Silguy was challenged to justify how the Commission could have produced such a long list of qualifiers, in view of more cautious economic forecasts from other expert bodies.

IMF world forecast, page 21



Milanese opulence: To prosperous northerners, the news that Italy is last in the race to qualify for EMU is humiliating

Photograph: Colorific

## Euro-rebuke wounds Prodi's pride

Andrew Gumbel  
Rome

There could have been no clearer sign of the helplessness of the Italian government: when the European Commission announced yesterday that Italy was at the bottom of the class of countries hoping to qualify for the single European currency, scarcely anyone had the strength to sound indignant.

Qualifying for monetary union on time has been the policy backbone of Romano Prodi's government, and failure will almost certainly spell its downfall. But yesterday the politicians could barely put a brave public face on the Commission's conclusions. Only Mr Prodi had the courage to call them "incomprehensible". The financial markets barely reacted.

According to the Commission's calculations, Italy will be close but not close enough to the 3-per-cent deficit-to-Gross Domestic Product ratio stipulated by the Maastricht treaty by the end of this year. It is then set to slide backwards towards a ratio of 3.9 per cent in 1998.

The Commission report did not rule out Italy's chances, but it made clear that further deep structural changes in the economy would be necessary to put the country back in the running.

The report was a stinging assault to Italy's pride. It is hardly flattering for a G7 country to be relegated below Spain and Portugal and left floundering just above Greece in the European pecking order.

The writing has been on the wall for some time. Because of the byzantine and contradictory architecture of Italy's governing coalition, last month's

mini-budget completely failed to deliver the austerity medicine that was needed, resorting instead to statistical manipulations that fooled nobody.

The same political difficulties almost scuppered the Italian-led intervention force which is now in Albania - an operation intended to boost Italy's international credibility but which has turned into banana-skin hell.

The latest slip-up was a cruel but accurate illustration of the government's general discomfort: the Italian flagship, the *Vittorio Veneto*, spent all of Tuesday and part of yesterday stuck on a windswept sandbank outside the port of Vlorë.

Mr Prodi's only chance of survival is to undertake a massive reform of the bloated, inefficient welfare state by the end of the year. His government is willing, but the party on which he depends for his majority in the

lower house of parliament, Rifondazione Comunista, opposes any cuts in public spending in the name of monetary union.

Two likely scenarios present themselves. According to the first, the impasse continues, Italy is left out of Europe and the government falls. According to the second, the Prodi government draws up a welfare reform programme, Rifondazione votes against and a crisis looms. The centre-right opposition then comes to the rescue, offers to vote for the welfare reform package but insists on the government's resignation as the price.

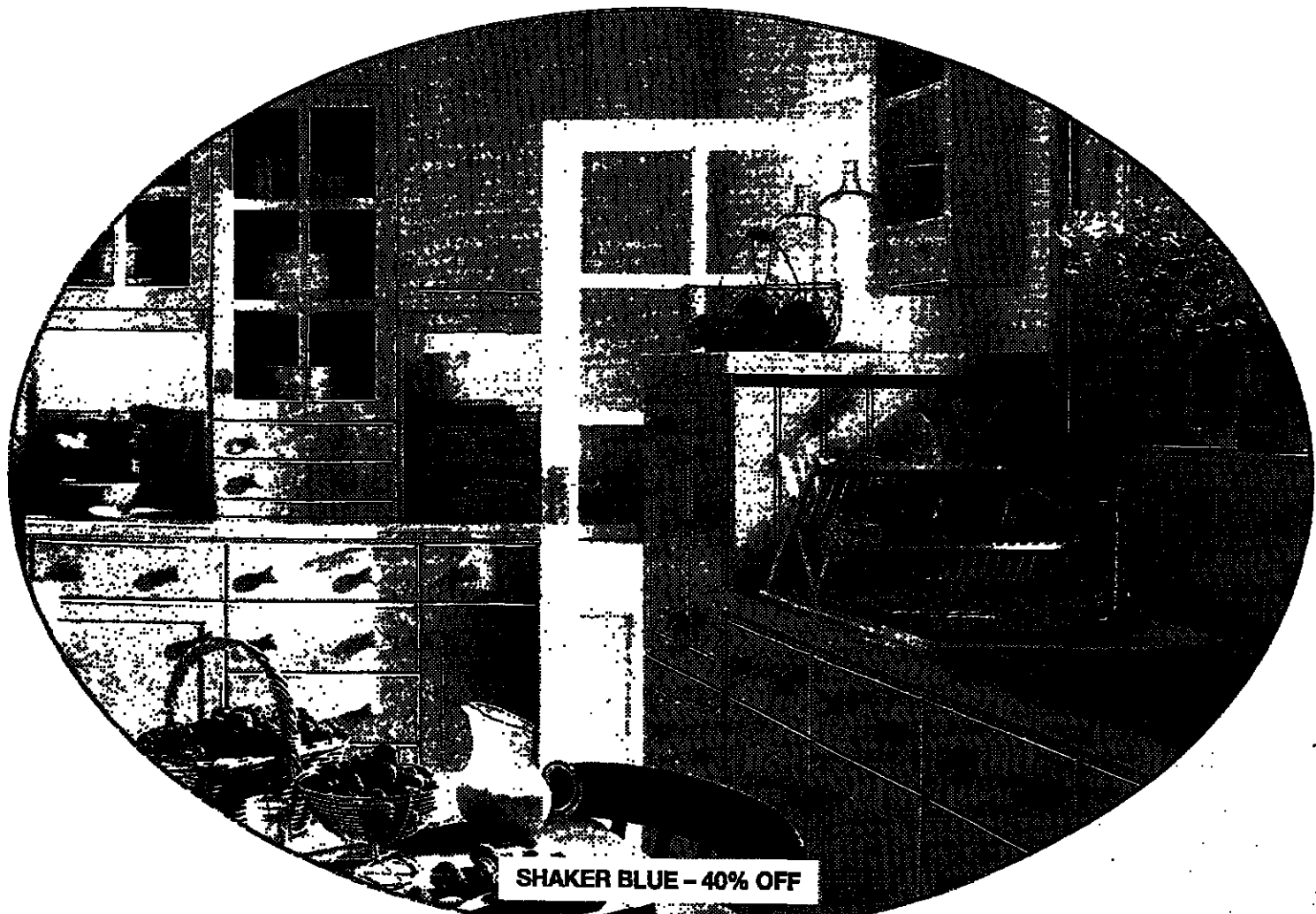
Either way, Mr Prodi's days are numbered. Whether Italy's prospects in Europe can be salvaged while his supporters set about the task of dumping him remains to be seen.

Leading article, page 17

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# Saddam's clan get full treatment at Uday's bedside

Patrick Cockburn

It was a tense meeting. Earlier this year Saddam Hussein, gathered the closest members of his family — the inner core of his regime — around the hospital bedside of Uday, his eldest son, paralysed by a bullet in the spine after an assassination attempt last December.

The Iraqi leader told his relatives who had come to the Ibn Sina hospital that their "craving for people's property" had become the talk of Iraq. He said their behaviour was damaging him and his regime. Pointing to Ali Hassan al-Majid, a cousin of the Iraqi leader famous for his brutality, the President said he had "played an important role in prompting me to make the decision to enter Kuwait". And once installed as governor of Iraq's new, 19th province, in 1990, he said: "You looted half the valuables looted in Kuwait". He reminded Ali Hassan he was once "a driver in Kirkuk".

Others got an equally rough ride. Half-brother Sabawi was meant to be a director of the security services but "he goes to his office at 11am, half asleep". President Saddam uttered vague threats against his other half-brother Barzan, Iraq's ambas-

sador in Geneva since 1988, saying: "I should not have left him all this time." Even Uday, facing a dangerous operation to remove the bullets in his body, is asked: "Are you a politician, a trader, a people's leader or a playboy?"

The transcript of the meeting was first published by the London-based magazine *al-Wasat* and has become the subject of intense discussion among Iraqi opponents of the regime. Who leaked the document, and why? President Saddam himself is the most likely culprit. His criticisms seem carefully scripted to show many of the nastier episodes in Iraq's recent history were not, as had been imagined, the fault of Saddam Hussein himself, but of his greedy relatives.

For instance, Gen Omar al-Hazaa, a member of the Iraqi leader's clan known for his denunciations of the regime when in his cups at the officers club in Baghdad, was executed in 1990. Saddam Hussein was blamed. But this turns out to have been unfair. Addressing Ali Hassan al-Majid, the Iraqi leader says: "It was you and Hussein Kamel [another son-in-law murdered last year when he unwisely returned to Baghdad from exile in Amman] who



Goldfinger: A lavishly dressed Uday recovering after his operation in the Ibn Sina hospital in Baghdad. Photograph: AP

caused me to execute Omar al-Hazaa and his sons". It was they who had the house of Gen Hazaa in Baghdad demolished by a bulldozer.

On the face of it, the Iraqi leader is past rehabilitation. So what good will it do him? The President may not know the extent to which he has entered Western demonology. A Palestinian leader who met him before the Gulf War discovered he did not know he had appeared on the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek*. He excitedly asked the Palestinian to get copies of the magazines from his hotel.

There may be a more subtle message in the leaked document. President Saddam may want to emphasise that his relatives are as bad as he is, in case anybody should think of replacing him by them. There is a note of self-pity which also seems authentic. In the case of the killing of Omar al-Hazaa, whose tongue was reportedly cut out after his death, he says: "It will always be said that Saddam did that; people will not say that Ali Hassan and Hussein Kamel did it."

President Saddam throws an interesting light on the politics

of his inner family. He relates how the governor of Kirkuk, a city in north-east Iraq, telephoned him because he had stopped trucks smuggling grain into Iran. These turned out to belong to Ali Hassan al-Majid. Another target is his third half-brother Waiban, former interior minister, shot through the leg by Uday at a drunken party on the banks of the Tigris in 1995. He says: "The Interior Ministry was ruined during your term". President Saddam mentions that he had fined him, presumably for corruption.

Up until 1995 Saddam Hussein's family seemed determined to stick together. Then Uday shot his uncle Waiban through the leg and Hussein Kamel fled to Jordan. He was killed on his return last year. Five months ago a relative of Gen al-Hazaa told gunmen where they could find Uday one night in Baghdad. He survived, but is crippled.

President Saddam may want to reassert control over his family. He may have hoped also that by spreading the blame for past atrocities, he may persuade the world to be more accommodating to him in future.

## significant shorts

### Clinton starts campaign to expand Nato east

The Clinton administration formally launched its campaign to win US Senate support for Nato enlargement, with the Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, ruling out compromise with Russia on a key demand: blocking an alliance security agreement with Moscow. "Russia would also like us to make absolute commitments in the (proposed Russia-Nato) charter about the deployment of nuclear and conventional forces on the territory's new members. But we will not compromise on this issue," she told the Senate Armed Services Committee. Reuters - Washington

### Rebels accused of massacre

Zairean villagers said Tutsi-dominated rebels slaughtered many Rwandan Hutu refugees at camps south of Kisangani and aid workers said they had reports that up to 55,000 refugees had fled. The villagers, travelling towards Kisangani, said a pitched battle between rebels and refugees accompanied the slaughter on Tuesday at camps near Kasese village, 25 km (15 miles) south of Kisangani. Reuters - Lusaka

### Embattled politician backed

Thousands of ultra-Orthodox Jews in black hats and suits rallied yesterday in support of the religious-party leader Ariele Deri, the only politician expected to be charged in a high-level influence-trading scandal. "If he was guilty, all the others would have been guilty," said Yehuda Cohen, a 16-year-old seminary student. "This is discrimination against a religious man." Mr Deri, leader of the religious Shas party, is expected to be indicted on extortion charges. The Attorney-General said there was not enough evidence to charge the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, or the Justice Minister, Tzachi Hanegbi, who were also linked to the scandal. AP - Jerusalem

### Cultists trained in Russia

Members of the Japanese Aum Shinri Kyo doomsday cult, which is accused of staging a deadly nerve-gas attack on Tokyo subway, underwent military training in Russia, a Russian investigator said yesterday. Senior investigator Boris Uvarov, of the state prosecutor's office, said a "whole chain of generals" used to arrange military workouts for wealthy foreigners at army bases in the years that followed the Soviet collapse. Aum used the opportunity to provide certain members with combat training, he said. The Russian general "leased their practice grounds for alleged touring programmes. Foreigners enjoy firing the Kalashnikov sub-machine-gun, flying our helicopters, parachute-jumping — suit yourselves, just pay," Mr Uvarov said. AP - Moscow

### Floodwaters recede

The level of muddy floodwater crept downwards yesterday, helping a National Guard sandbagging blitz save a power station that keeps a few lights burning brightly in what remains of this submerged city. The Red River has been falling since early Tuesday and was down to 53.5 feet (16.3m) yesterday, said the US Geological Survey. AP - Grand Forks, North Dakota

### Hostage relatives end visit

Relatives of Western tourists kidnapped by Kashmiri separatists nearly two years ago ended their four-day visit to Kashmir valley yesterday with little success in learning the hostages' fate. "We don't know the truth whether the hostages are alive or dead. That's the position of the government as well," Julie Mangan, whose husband, Keith Mangan, is among the missing men, told reporters. AP - Srinagar

### Ciller warns off military

The Deputy Prime Minister, Jansu Ciller, yesterday told the military to stay out of politics. Turkey's military, which sees itself as the guardian of the country's secular tradition, has been at loggerheads for months with the Islamic-led government. Ms Ciller, whose True Path party is part of the Islamic-led coalition government, said in a speech that "politics is the job of elected politicians". AP - Ankara

### Race-attack Germans jailed

A German court yesterday sentenced two young thugs to 15 and eight-year jail terms for a racist attack on Italian building workers which left one of the victims paralysed and barely able to speak. The court in Potsdam near Berlin found both men guilty of attempted murder for attacking the Italians with a baseball bat in the town of Trebbin last September after setting out on what the presiding judge called a "real manhunt". Reuters - Potsdam

### Pulitzer columnist critical

The Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Mike Royko, whose commentaries appear in newspapers across the United States, was in critical condition yesterday after suffering a seizure at his home, a hospital said. Reuters - Chicago

# Yeltsin signs China friendship treaty

Helen Womack  
Moscow

Russia turns eastward to forge new friendship after failing to halt Nato plans

Russia and China, closer now than at any time since the doomed Sino-Soviet alliance of the 1950s, yesterday issued a joint declaration on strategic co-operation for the 21st century. They denied they were uniting against any particular country but, in calling for a "multi polar world" in which no nation played a dominant role, they

clearly implied criticism of the United States, the only remaining superpower.

The historic agreement was signed when the Chinese president Jiang Zemin met Boris Yeltsin in the gilded hall of the Grand Kremlin Palace. "We have not signed such a document with any other country," said Mr Yeltsin, who has been

trying to diversify Russian foreign policy since failing to persuade Nato against the need for eastward expansion.

The 66-year-old Russian leader lacked his usual verve at the signing ceremony, but Michael De Bakay, the American surgeon who acted as a consultant during his heart operation last November, said

that flu was the problem, not further heart trouble.

President Yeltsin and his guest from Peking expressed their "concern over the attempt at enlarging and strengthening military blocks because such a tendency may — aggravate regional and global tension".

Instead of this, their declaration said, it was time for a new

world order. "The Cold War has ended. The bipolar system has ceased to exist. The positive trend towards a multipolar world is accelerating. All countries, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are equal members of the international community. No country should seek hegemony, practise power politics or monopolise international affairs."

The extracts of the document which were made available to the press contained few concrete details on how to achieve this goal. But the two presidents stressed the importance of the United Nations, and also called for continuing disarmament.

Today, together with the leaders of the former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, they will sign a treaty cutting armed forces along the former Soviet-Chinese frontier.

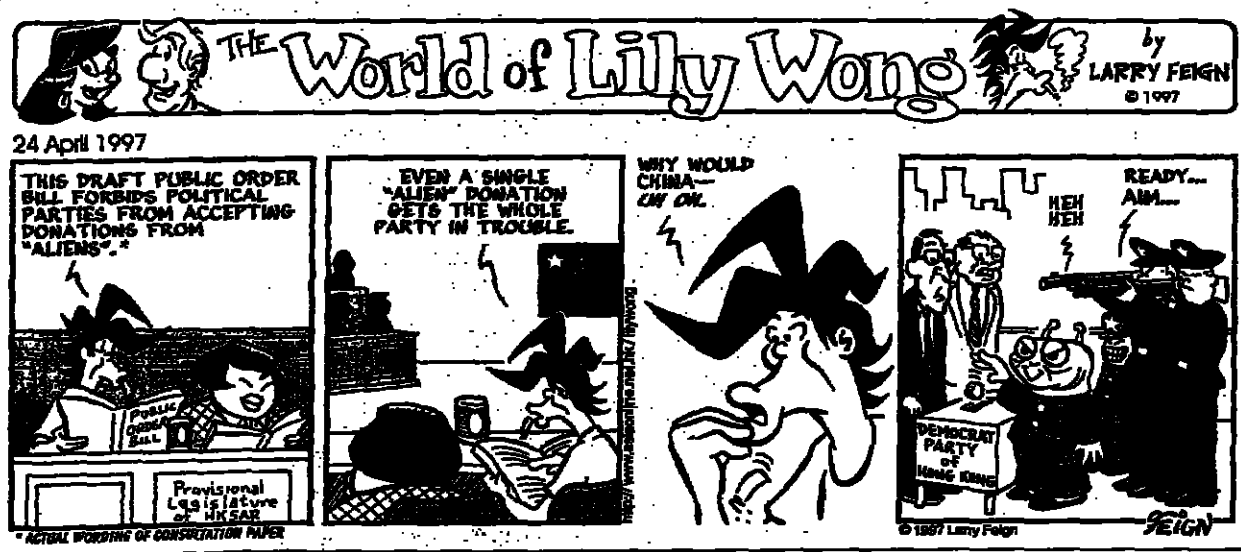
It was here, 28 years ago, that relations between the two Communist giants reached rock bottom. After Stalin and Mao had worked enthusiastically together in the 1950s, supporting North Korea in its war with the South, the Soviet Union and China became bitter ideological

foes in the 1960s and even came to blows on their common border in 1969.

But Mikhail Gorbachev healed the rift by visiting Peking in 1989 and relations have been steadily warming since. Russia, which has had more success reforming itself politically than economically, is fascinated by China, which has made an economic breakthrough while leaving its monolithic Communist system more or less intact.

The Kremlin hopes to use this week's five-day visit by President Jiang to show the West that, since Nato insists on expanding against its wishes, Russia has no choice but to widen the range of its friendships. China yesterday complained about Bill Clinton's decision to meet the exiled Tibetan leader, the Dalai Lama, which it sees as another example of the kind of US moralising which has pushed it into the arms of a less judgmental Russia.

Aides to Mr Yeltsin were at pains to stress, however, that Russo-Chinese co-operation stopped short of a formal alliance and was not aimed against any third country. "The very suggestion of plans to create some counter blocs are wrong and counter productive," said the Kremlin spokesman, Sergei Yastrzhembsky.



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# Death

**Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister**



# Death of ideology is greatly exaggerated

Not even the most numb-kneed Tory party sycophant would call John Major an original thinker. Why, tactician, maybe, but not a Tory leader you would put in the same category as Arthur Balfour or Lord Salisbury. Paddy Ashdown, likewise, is not someone who comes across as a conceptualiser. When we wrote, not critically, that the Liberal Democrats were a party with many ideas rather than an ideology, Conrad (Lord) Russell took us to task, claiming lineal descent from John Stuart Mill. If so, the party has descended through various rustic branch-lines: its family resemblance to its famous predecessor is less marked than Lord Russell's to his. Mr Ashdown does not spend much time debating the essence of democratic liberalism or liberal democracy for that matter.

The Labour leader is another matter. Tony Blair is no continental intellectual. We do not breed party leaders with the theoretical clout of, say, the former German social democrat leader Helmut Schmidt or the academic weight of the French socialist Lionel Jospin. Yet before the demands of electioneering took him over, Mr Blair could be spied at seminars convened by the Institute of Public Policy Research and similar think-tanks. Then, the occasional "ism" could be heard tripping off his tongue even if, somewhat too often, it emerged as the vague "communitarianism". But the campaign has in large measure seen the

Labour leader staying safely away from big ideas and keeping his bat straight.

Until, that is, the past couple of days. Suddenly Tony Blair seems to have been cut loose. He has taken to the stage without a script, doing something extraordinary, in the terms in which this campaign has been conducted till now, which is thinking aloud. What his audiences have been hearing is a kind of public meditation — Prince Hal-like — on the duties of leadership and his rendezvous with history. Taken at face value (too much should not be read into what is said during these hectic days), his recent remarks suggest Mr Blair has yet more surprises in store for his party, including perhaps its intellectual demise.

The gist of Mr Blair's political thought was captured yesterday in his prediction that "this election will be the last fought on ideology". By "ideology" he meant the old way of dividing right and left on how large a role they accord the state. On one side stood individualists, on the other collectivists; on one capitalists, on the other socialists.

That such division is anachronistic is an old suggestion. At the end of the 1950s Daniel Bell used the phrase to signal the onset of an era in which every one accepted the existence of the welfare state. Other writers took up the theme, claiming that modern politics was essentially a technocratic affair in which all the public had to do was decide which party would manage the system

best. Tony Blair seems attracted by this idea. Appraise my suitability — he implies — on the basis of my party management skills. Perhaps he has been reading Francis Fukuyama, American author of the cloudy *The End of History*. Fukuyama argued that at the end of the Cold War, a liberal-democratic model of politics now rules mankind, conflicts within which are essentially trivial. There remain practical problems, to be sure, in economic and social life but these are dully second-order ones, which need to be approached pragmatically. Fukuyama's book was a strange mixture of triumphalism and gloom. It was

heavily influenced by Nietzsche (this newspaper is against Nietzsche) but was, in its turn, heavily influential on a rising generation which believes that all is management, nothing is ideology. Support what works; that's it. This, in essence, is what President Clinton was saying in his State of the Union address earlier this year.

No one sensible is against practical solutions or good management. But it is a dangerous leap to think that, therefore, politics in the old sense is dead. However it is labelled, and wherever it is conducted, from ancient Athens to contemporary Seoul, politics

exists because society involves conflict. There is conflict for power, resources and freedom. There is conflict between groups and individuals, some of whom will win and some lose. Politics is a grown-up art because politics recognises this and doesn't shy from it: only in the schmaltzy dreamland of dictators and king-emperors is there no conflict, a harmonious and happily managed people. So long as there are limited resources and complex social organisation, with power centralised and rules imposed, there will be politics.

And the real problem for modern politicians is this: without ideology, without an intellectual template, how do you know which groups should win and which, at least relatively, lose? How do you make sense of a chaos of small managerial dilemmas? Without a compass, how do you know where you are going? Tory nationalists have an ideology, which defends traditional centres of national power against globalisation. They may be wrong-headed but they will be able to know when they are winning. The same went for the old left. But what is the core political focus for the new centre-left, whether it be American Democrats or British New Labour?

We think the key idea is, or ought to be, radicalism, meaning a determination to break down excessive centres of power (which could be in European bureaucracies, trade unions, multinational corporations, media empires or

pension funds) in favour of the small guy. Radical politics would recognise that in the global market there is a natural tendency for power to cluster around fewer and fewer players; and that the proper role for politicians is to stand against that, to constantly shake up and break up in order to protect social diversity and mobility. It may seem an abstract thought. In government, it wouldn't be. We are all for management; but every management needs a guiding purpose.

## Lachrymal Latins

The exam results were posted at the Brussels Academy yesterday, and one member of the Class of '99 has dissolved in tears. Italy, the country that gave us the Roman Empire, Michaelangelo and the *cappuccino*, has failed to clear the first hurdle for entry to the University of the Euro. The only other country which does not appear on the "pass" list posted by the European Commission is Greece, the school drop-out. They were only mock exams, of course, and there were cries that the teachers had been too soft. But they were a dry run for life-altering tests coming very soon; and on them, the future of the continent may rest.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Hospitals fail to accept the fact of death

Sir: It was with great sadness and deepening familiarity that we read John Hoyland's account of his stepfather's final illness ("Thanks, NHS, for a rotten way to die", 22 April), endured in the context of a health service seemingly ill-equipped to deal with the complexities of illness in old age.

As health professionals specialising in the care of older people we recognise the failings of a service where measures of "success" are increasingly based on performance rather than quality, and attention to detail is eclipsed by the pressure to "get the job done".

It is tempting to lay blame at the door of health professionals, managers or even politicians, but to do so would be missing the point. Mr Hoyland's account is more an indictment of our attitudes to ageing, and the inadequacies of the NHS are perhaps a paradigm of the ageism which abounds in society. DR MARTIN VERNON SUSAN JACKSON Newbury Park, Essex

Sir: I would like to endorse John Hoyland's moving article about his stepfather's illness with regard to the total inability of the NHS to acknowledge the fact of death.

An elderly tenant whom we looked after in the final years of his life went into hospital about six weeks ago with bronchial pneumonia. After a few days he contracted an infection and was moved to an isolated ward. After a few days in hospital it was quite clear to us that he was dying. On one occasion we made an inquiry as to his condition. "Oh he's doing fine, he's sitting up, he's making good progress," said the staff nurse. When we went in to see him later that day we found him, indeed, sitting up, but with all sorts of tubes coming out of him and an oxygen mask over his face. A few days later we were told, "Oh he's a bit poorly today" as if he had a mild touch of the flu. We found him deathly white and in a coma. He died the following day.

During this period we were also going through a ludicrous charade with the social services to secure provision for his care when he came out. Like John Hoyland, we found that nobody in the medical and nursing services was prepared to accept that (old) people die. This seems to me a reflection of society's inability as a whole to come to terms with the fact of death.

Until we are able to accept that death is an integral part of life, then we will never satisfactorily be able to deal with many of the problems that life itself throws up. And old people will continue to die painful and humiliating deaths. ROGER LLOYD PACK London NWS

Sir: John Hoyland's article brought back many painful memories of how my late father, who also suffered from Parkinson's disease, was treated by the NHS.

He suffered for 18 years before he died in 1979 and John Hoyland is exactly right when he states that there is no suitable palliative care outside of the hospice movement. My father was a good amateur athlete in his youth and served in the RAF in the Second World War, but to the NHS he was no more than a guinea pig for treatments that came too late for him and finally a burden. We found him literally tied to a chair in one hospital because they didn't want



him to get bed sores by lying in bed, but had neither the time nor resources to do anything with him.

In the hospital where he was admitted for urgent surgery to a strangulated hernia, he was left without medication and food, urine bottles were left by his bedside for hours as he was unable to make enough fuss for anyone to come and remove them. Finally he was discharged home with abscesses on every stitch as a result of which he haemorrhaged and was admitted back into ITU as an emergency. We actually received a written apology for that, but it did not alter the fact that he had suffered needlessly.

He died early one Friday evening in a general ward in the middle of visiting time. It was both an inappropriate and undignified way to die. Since then, I have myself worked in the health service, both in administration and clinical work and have to say that there is no training to speak of in dealing with incurables. The whole focus is on treatment at any cost however undignified to the patient.

As a student diagnostic radiographer I saw elderly, desperately ill patients sent for barium enemas when they had no capacity to retain the barium. Inevitably their bowels evacuated and left them embarrassed and distressed beyond words. Hospitals can be very intimidating places and it is hard when you are feeling at your lowest ebb to insist on fair treatment.

There is a huge difference between assisting someone to die and helping them accept death if that is their only option. Is it too much to ask that we show kindness and tolerance towards those whom we cannot cure? Mrs D E CARTMAN Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

### Labour: we won't privatise NHS

Sir: Your article on the failures of the Tories' Private Finance Initiative in the National Health Service ("No escape from privatisation for NHS", 22 April) rightly sets out what a shambles it has been. Not a single brick has been laid for a major hospital scheme, despite constant re-announcements of supposed progress from ministers.

But you wrongly suggest that Labour has embraced the privatisation agenda in the NHS. We haven't.

We do believe it is right and proper to involve the private sector in public/private partnership for the provision of new hospital facilities. But the Tories want to go further, and have openly said that they would welcome the privatisation of clinical services. They are already doing it — at Stonehaven in Scotland and at the Royal Hallamshire in Sheffield. Any such commercial operation of patient care endangers the precious relationship between health professionals and patient — dedicated to the clinical needs of the patient and no other considerations.

On this issue there is a gulf between the two parties. CHRIS SMITH Shadow Secretary of State for Health The Labour Party London SE17

### Some advice on tactics

Sir: I was interested in your reaction to Vanessa Redgrave's decision to vote for me and Bruce Kent's negative response (letter, 21 April). I have to tell him that Ms Redgrave is just one of a large number of people here who have realised that there is no point in voting Labour as they won't make any difference on the issues they consider important. In her case, these are human rights issues; for others it is investment in education or the health service. In each case, the only real difference is between the old parties on the one hand and the Liberal Democrats on the other.

I had a lot of sympathy for tactical voting campaigns at the last election in seats like ours. However, GROT's intervention this time is irrelevant. Everyone knows that the Tories are going to lose here and the debate has moved on to who we want to replace them. Voters must choose between honesty, investment in public services and commitment to human rights on the one hand and a lot of vacuous waffle on the other. GARETH HARTWELL Candidate, Breiford and Isleworth Liberal Democrats Isleworth, Middlesex

Sir: Tactical voting is back on the agenda for many, like me, for whom the big priority on 1 May is a change of government and also a significant increase in Lib Dem MPs.

I am a Liberal Democrat supporter, especially because of their attitude to the environment and education funding, but at the last general election, here in Rugby, Labour came second. A swing in line with the opinion polls could oust our Tory MP so long as the two main opposition parties do not carve up the remaining votes too equally between them. So I will vote Labour on 1 May, while informally "paired" with Labour friends in Oxford West, who will vote Liberal Democrat as the best chance of unseating John Patten. I will vote Lib Dem in the local election.

This kind of tactical voting is both a principled and serious response to the desperate need to have a government committed to the whole community and not just the haves and have nots. It is made easier because for many of us the differences between Labour and the Liberal Democrats pale into insignificance when contrasted with either of their differences with the Conservatives. DAVID CHARLES EDWARDS Rugby, Warwickshire

Sir: Polly Toynbee is correct in asserting that "on the ground each local party wants to win" ("Britain Decides: The Independent's Guide to the Election"). Of course they do. Anyone who's been a candidate has shared that ambition — especially given that it's costing you and your family in terms of lost income, time and stress.

However, she is wrong to call the tactical vote a "blunt instrument for change" — given a reliably

informed local constituency electorate there is no reason why switching to the candidate most likely to beat the Tory should not deprive the Conservative Party of at least 90 seats. RICHARD DENTON Co-Chair Get Rid of Them Tactical Vote Campaign London N16

### Driven away by noisy shows

Sir: Workers have to be offered ear protection when noise levels reach a specified level. Yet the public attending places of "entertainment" can be subjected to painful levels of music and amplified speech.

My family and I have left several cinemas early in the showing of a film because the sound track has been far too loud, and my young daughter was disappointed when the same thing happened when we took her to see two different circuses and a superb (except for the sound) international clown display; even using ear plugs, the noise at these events has been painful and, probably, damaging to hearing.

Unfortunately one has to part with one's money before knowing whether a particular venue uses excessively loud amplification and hence has the potential to damage one's health. With studies showing that many teenagers have impaired hearing, why do we exacerbate this problem by permitting dangerous levels of sound in places of public entertainment? LILIAN SIMLETT-MOSS Southport, Merseyside

### Dangers of TV abortion veto

Sir: As someone who is totally committed to a woman's right to abortion, I find the idea that broadcasters can veto the Pro-Life Alliance election broadcast far more offensive than anything the transmission might contain. This veto sets a far-reaching precedent. Do we really want to encourage the ability of the media to decide for the electorate what those standing in the election can and cannot put forward as part of their case?

Those of us who are pro-choice have nothing to fear from the proposed footage anyway. Our case for legal abortion does not rest on whether the procedure is pleasant or unpleasant. Once termination of pregnancy is placed in the context of a choice between compelling a woman to carry to term a child she does not want to have or allowing her to end that pregnancy, the fact that the procedure, like any other operation, does not look nice, becomes unimportant. ELLIE LEE Pro-Choice Forum Canterbury

Sir: If abortion is a sufficiently decent act to perform, how come it is not a sufficiently decent act to broadcast? Courtesy of (non-fiction) broadcasts, I have seen embalmers working on week-old corpses, seen a man shot in the head, and watched the walking skeletons of those condemned to die by their fellow human beings' greed. Abortion must be a pretty terrible thing. Dr EMMA FOX Birmingham

### Don't plug racism

Sir: We represent over 250 union members in the Export Credit Guarantee Department on the Isle of Dogs. It is a racially mixed office.

Over three years ago, the British National Party had their candidate, Derek Beackon, elected as a councillor for the Isle of Dogs. The increase of racist literature, stickers and graffiti was paralleled by a 200 per cent increase in racist attacks in the area. Some of our members were victims of these attacks and racial abuse. The rest of our black and Asian members feared the journey from the office to the bus stop or station until the campaign led by the Anti-Nazi League to boot Beackon out was successful in May 1994.

Now with the general election a week away, our members are horrified at the prospect of the British National Party broadcasting to millions across the country this Friday, John Tyndall, the BNP leader, is standing in the Poplar/Canning Town constituency — and already more racist stickers have returned to the Isle of Dogs.

The broadcasters can help to stop them — pull the plug on Friday. PAT CARMODY CPSA Branch Assistant Secretary WENDY LIVINGSTON Trades Union Side Equal Opportunities Officer London E14

### Blair's secret

Sir: On your front page (23 April) you ask "Why is Tony Blair aping Norman Tebbit?" on Europe.

The answer is simple and clear, not least to Mr Blair and Mr Mandelson. Mr Blair wants to win the election and he knows he can do so only by aping Norman Tebbit. Lord TEBBIT House of Lords London SW1



# post-materialism

## A serpent in our cool green Eden

Everyone knows that consumer society is destroying the planet, but the politicians realise there are no votes in sacrificing our lifestyles. Or at least not yet, says Richard D North

"Nice fella, no good. Agriculture, probably," thus a cynical politician's judgement on some dull colleague and his ministerial prospects in Harley Granville-Barker's 1926 *Waste*, which is currently reminding Old Vic audiences that nothing much changes in politics. But some things do. Food production has turned out to match traffic as an issue on which people's doubts about modern ways of living worry them. Even so, Granville-Barker's words still apply and he might have added, "Environment, probably", if he wanted to suggest another "B-list" ministry.

None the less, secretaries of state for the environment have been at least middleweights, because the brief includes local government, which always requires a bit of watching. And increasingly, the core issue – the nuisances, large and small, caused by a greedy society – have demanded and even attracted the boss's attention. The latest, John Gummer, has stolen a march which none of his mainstream political opponents have dared to match. It is the sort of move which demonstrates how hard it is for opposition parties to make the biggest new issue of the century into the stuff of elections.

Mr Gummer has repeatedly said that it is not the water companies' fault that we are short of water and it is certainly not the fault of the Tories. Climate change, he says, has caused the current dryness, unparalleled in recent times.

The Tories need to demonstrate that when they sold the purveyors of one of the three great natural resources (the others being air and soil), it was the prelude – as the late Nicholas Ridley said it would be – to a period of strict regulation and high investment. Any very recent failings need to be acts of God, lest they be portrayed as deficiencies of administration.

But Mr Gummer's was an important political remark. As a statement of whether we face environmental catastrophe because of our gaseous emissions, it is a little ahead of the scientific consensus. Still, Mr Gummer might be right and is in any case sending the right, slightly alarmed, signals. Global warming, like so many other issues in the environment, is a question of risk, and therefore of taking a gamble. His remarks on the matter are the mirror-image of the silly optimism and lack of caution with which, as Agriculture Minister, he made the first tranche of ministerial remarks about BSE.

But of course, even in an unseasonal drought, greening politics goes further than fire-fighting. "The parties and the media are getting the

message that the environment is not a first-order issue," says Stephen Tindale, of the middle-of-the-road Green Alliance, which aims to put the issue at the centre of politics. It is by now the standard mantra, and goes on to point out that public perception is a peculiar animal: polling insists, for instance, that the environment scores more highly than Europe as a concern of the electorate, though they both come way behind the economy, health and education. But that analysis also reveals it as the issue which won't bark, and which unites people within and between parties as one seen to be more moral than political, just as Europe divides people as a matter more emotional than empirical.

It is likely that there are two sources of one's unease about the environment. The first is that our present carelessness may backfire and hurt us, or our children. We might, for instance, want to clean up rivers, or limit some pesticides on these, light green, grounds. By and large, we have done those things which obviously screamed out for attention, and the Tories can claim that they

### 6 Brundtland said sustainable development's hurdle was democracy

have mostly matched the wider European and Western expectation in such matters. No other party seriously believes the electorate is hungry for big further changes, say in management of the chemical industry, and no other party thinks it has a distinctly different political approach to offer. Unlike most social issues, this is not one that resolves itself into a matter of how much to soak the rich to help the disadvantaged. Most environmental improvements would impinge on rich and poor about equally, perhaps on the poor more.

The second source of unease is far harder to manage. Judeo-Christianity is often denounced for its language of man's "dominion" over the world. But it has far more signally reminded us that selfishness and greed are the source of private spiritual and social well-being. Modern affluence has linked with environmental concern and this far older tradition to produce a post-materialism which lurks in many a breast. Hardly a new phenomenon: when H G Wells castigated the "Utopian unworshipfulness of an irresponsible rich man of the shareholding type," he was thinking of the proto-greens, William Morris and John Ruskin. It is tempting to hang the same label on

several modern high-profile greens. But Wells was at least a bit wrong: Morris was a rich man who got richer by purveying a medieval design ethic and wrapping the whole in heartfelt anti-materialism. Laura Ashley, Terence Conran, Anita Roddick, Jonathan Porritt, Greenpeace's Peter Melchett and Friends of the Earth's Charles Secrett would all have to be bundled together to make anything like a new Morris, and even so would have difficulty matching the passion and talent, let alone the profitability, of the Victorian model. But humbug remains the biggest charge against green leaders and most of their followers too.

"I'm interested in ideas," says a young politician in *Waste*. "Then why go into politics?" asks a worldly-wise MP. The piece picks over the perennial matter of whether morality has any place in democracy. It meshes well with Stephen Tindale's reminder that Gro Harlem Brundtland, the Norwegian socialist and official midwife to the idea of sustainable development, once said that her offspring's biggest hurdle was to survive democracy.

Shouldn't greens, like church leaders, press their Utopianism from a position of integrity unsullied by power-seeking? This is the oldest issue in the politicisation of greenery and the value of Jonathan Porritt is that he has renounced conventional green politics because it is too unworshipful, whilst retaining the loftiness which used to attach to difficult bishops. His brand of pained arrogance may irritate many of us, but it is hard to doubt his high seriousness. In his new role as one of the three leaders of the Forum for the Future he is one of several gurus who are winning business round to greenery. Business is, one suspects, more than happy to have them inside the tent. Anything, including being lectured, beats confrontation.

However, even if much greenery – even practical greenery – is vaguely absurd, who is to say that it is not the seed of something which will blossom later? In his fantasy on the socialist and Utopian medieval priest John Ball, Morris writes: "I pondered how men fight and lose the battle, and the thing they fight for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes it turns out not to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name." Men do not know the harm they do, even when they seek to do good. But equally, the good they do may not become obvious for years. So there is hope for the Green Party even as it speaks a deal of what conventionally sounds like nonsense. Its spokespeople are certainly effortless guardians of the idealist ethic. But in their custodianship of the process which led to the recent Road Traffic Reduction Act and the Home Energy Conservation Act, they can also claim to have been important in the enactment of the only two legislative measures which impose a duty on any authority (actually, only local authorities) to assume that reduced

consumption is something to be encouraged.

The Greens' total vote grew well in all the elections after the first in which they stood, in October 1974. Chris Rose, their national election agent, rather charmingly points out that this is not because the party became more popular, but because it has until this year fielded more candidates each time: "Our share of the vote in constituencies where we stand has remained about the same." Except in the election for the European Parliament in 1989, when the party scored over a fifth of the vote in half a dozen constituencies and nearly 15 per cent of the total, its share has not risen above 1.5 per cent (as against a green vote in Germany which rose to

### 6 Porritt has renounced green politics as unworshipful while acting like a bishop

7.4 per cent in the Bundestag election of 1994, giving them 49 seats under proportional representation).

The Lib-Dems are probably the most naturally green of the mainstream British parties: composed of mildly affluent urban worriers whose politics are a cross between a crusade and a hobby, this was bound to be the case. The Tories have already overseen a deliberate increase in the taxing of petrol, but the Lib-Dems propose to go further, and in exchange to reduce road tax on smaller engines. That is brave because it risks upsetting the party's natural constituency. It appeals only to the better nature of the high-mileage Lib-Dem with the big lump under the bonnet.

Still, it is hard to match John Gummer's statements on traffic, housing and out-of-town

supermarkets. All assume that we may have to curtail our preferred consumption patterns. That is post-materialism by the back door. It is also quite brave: Conservatives naturally enough like firmness best when it applies to the lower orders, not to their own. Perhaps, as a Christian, Mr Gummer is drawn to an area in which private morality must overflow into policy. When Peter Lilley says that his job is not to tax big pay cheques, he then usefully adds that their recipients are under a large but private obligation to redistribute their wealth. It is, after all, a bar to the entry to heaven. Green virtue cannot in quite the same way be private.

And where is Labour? In Michael Meacher they have a shadow environmental protection minister who seems amiable and serious. It looked a little unwise in him publicly to espouse in mid-campaign a particular environmental cause (that which suggests organo-phosphates are involved in the transmission of BSE) just as he stands a serious chance of receiving the full weight of official evidence on the matter and to be taking on the kind of responsibilities that make banning this or that look rather more complicated than it appears to outsiders. It seems right, on the other hand, to propose, as he does, modestly stricter targets for controlling greenhouse gases.

Mr Meacher seems like the kind of man who would rather read or write a good book than buy a speedboat. But asked whether New Labour was a good child of the spiritual socialism of Morris, who saw that "one must cast away riches and attain wealth", he sighed and smiled mildly. "I have a lot of sympathy with people who want peace and quiet and the opportunity for tranquillity, but they'll always be a minority. Winning elections is a pretty hard-headed business."

It's true: in this century the Western world has convulsed itself to both deny and defend the right in people to be grossly vulgar if they like. They like.



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## At last! Shakespeare's long-lost St George

Yesterday was St George's Day. It was also Shakespeare's birthday. But have you ever thought how odd it was that these two great English occasions should be celebrated on the same day? And that there must be some connection between them, however unlikely?

Well, there is! Experts have recently uncovered the remains of a hitherto unknown Shakespeare play which is on the very subject of St George and the Dragon. It is called, as you might expect, *The Two Georges of Smyrna*.

Would you like to see an extract? You wouldn't? Well, too bad, because here it is. *The scene is a back street of Smyrna, some time between the invention of Christianity and the modern day. Enter George, a knight errant, with his attendant dragon.*

George: We have journeyed many a mile together Before we came to this fair town named Smyrna. And now we seek a place to lay our weary heads. Which is not quite so easy as it sounds. For every door on which we knock for help Has got a sign saying: "Dragons not welcome here". Why do they like you not?  
Dragon: I cannot tell. We dragons are a harmless lot, God wot. We puff and blow and make a lot of noise. And cause a little fire from time to time. Why, I myself once burnt a haystack down While laughing at a joke. My gusty breath Being full of sparks did catch a corner of the hay And moments later there was nothing left. But every dragon has a tale like this. Thereafter are we careful with our breath And never cause another fire again. Not so with humankind, whose carelessness

Leaves every town ablaze from time to time.  
George: Yes, yes, I know. We humans are to blame For everything that happens in this world. Yet somehow shift the blame to dragons. This is the constant burden of your plaint.  
Dragon: And it is true, as you have oft confessed! George: You may be right, but that is not the point.  
Dragon: What is the point, oh holy one-to-be, Oh martyr on the make, oh future saint?  
George: The point is seeking lodgings for the night. And that would be a simple thing to find Did I not have a dragon at my side!  
Dragon: Oh, now I start to catch your general drift! I cramp your style, is what you mean to say! I, who have saved your life so often in the past, Am now a little surplus to your wants! Upon the road I am your trusty friend But here in town a mere embarrassment!



Miles Kingston

George: Now, look, old dragon friend...  
Dragon: No, say no more! I'll take your hint and make myself right scarce. I have a cousin here in Smyrna, a dragon like me. With whom I may perchance find room to stay. I'll search him out and bother you no more. Tomorrow you can buy a horse and then You'll look just like a normal knight again.  
George: Nay, fair dragon. Take not offence at me! We have endured so many dangers, me and thee, That being bound together in a common plight, We should not be parted by a trifling fight.  
Dragon: Ye cannot soften me with all this rhyme. Perhaps we'll meet again some other time. The dragon tosses his head proudly and goes off without a second glance. George scratches his head ruefully.  
George: Alas, I do repent me of my hasty tongue. Which yet again has far outrun my thought. But night draws on and I have still no bed. And nowhere in Smyrna to lay my weary head. Yet hold! Have I not a long-lost cousin Whose name is also George, here in this town? I think I have! Him will I search for now! Enter a second dragon, who starts on seeing George and then hails him.  
2nd Dragon: Why, master, are you here again so soon?  
George: What mean you, fool? I've ne'er been here before!  
2nd Dragon: Oh, master, that's a sorry tale to tell...

Well, it's quite clear what's going to happen, isn't it? George and the dragon have both got identical cousins in Smyrna and there's going to be a lot of incredibly unfunny mistaken identity before everything is cleared up. So I think we'll quietly lose the manuscript again.

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COMMENT

Those who believe the City to be a place peopled only by greedy spivs will draw much comfort from their view from this bid. If this were any old house being burgled by the City, then perhaps nobody would take that much notice. But it is not; it is the Co-op.

## Assault on Co-op is a significant City scandal

As the story of Andrew Regan's assault on the Cooperative Wholesale Society draws towards its final denouement, the City needs to be asking itself some hard and searching questions. No apology is offered for returning, scratched record like, to this extraordinary saga or for the high morale tone being adopted in these columns, for we are looking, we believe, at a very significant City scandal here.

With the approach of a new Labour government, filled with reforming and high ethical zeal, the City needs this episode like a hole in the head. It is not just that Mr Regan's assault on the CWS is an act of unrestrained greed. That, perhaps, is what we must expect from the modern City. It is much worse than this for it now transpires that the assault also involves unauthorised plunder of commercial secrets and confidences on an unprecedented scale. Seven boxes of the stuff have over the months been smuggled out of the CWS and delivered to order to Mr Regan and his henchmen.

This might amount to everyday practice for Mr Regan and his fellow conspirators, but can it really be par for the course at Hambros, Schroders, Travers Smith Braithwaite, Allen and Overy, Nomura, Clifford Chance and all the other top drawer City firms involved in this takeover? They might vainly protest now that the information supplied by Green and others has not been of much use to them in their disreputable endeavour, but they lapped it up at the time.

Nor does the insistence of Hambros's and others that the information was provided "voluntarily", and that legal advice was taken on it, provide any more than the latest possible of excuses. Blinded by the fees on offer, said to amount to £35m to Hambros alone in the event of success, these are organisations which have failed to ask the right questions either of themselves or their clients.

Did they know where the documents were coming from? And if they did, were they aware that the man supplying them had also sold a CWS contract to Mr Regan for £2.85m which Mr Regan himself believed to be worth £5m, the difference being pocketed by a shadowy offshore middleman?

Those that believe the City to be a place peopled only by greedy spivs will draw comfort from their view from this bid. If this were any old house being burgled by the City, then perhaps nobody would take that much notice. But it is not; it is the Co-op. It is the people of the North, people on below average incomes, old Labour territory, honest, decent people with little understanding of offshore tax havens and high rolling financiers, people to whom the language of cost cutting, asset management, return on capital and shareholder value is as alien as a foreign tongue.

If it is not careful, the City will find itself punished for its act of piracy, and as usual, it will only have itself to blame. As for the bid itself, we can expect another day of mod flog-

ging when the show returns to the High Court tomorrow, but it hard to see what Mr Regan can hope to salvage from the wreckage now.

### Fudge on euro contradicted by IMF

The boffins of Brussels have plainly gone through one of those exercises made so easy by modern computer technology in arriving at yesterday's Economic Forecasts for members of the European Union. First, you choose the answer you want to get out of your equations - it was a deficit of three per cent of GDP on the nose in this case. Then you work backwards to find the profile for GDP growth that will deliver this pleasing round number.

Oh, but not in the case of Italy. It suffered the ignominy of being one of the two countries (the other was Greece) the Commission said will not get its government deficit below that mystical three per cent of GDP figure this year. No wonder the Italians were furious at being left out when the Eurocrats handed round the fudge. And no wonder the financial markets just laughed at the Commission figures.

The International Monetary Fund had a better stab at forecasting EU budget deficits. It said nine rather than 15 countries are likely to meet the budget deficit criterion. The six that will probably not make it are the EU's five biggest economies - Germany,

France, Italy, the UK and Spain - plus Greece. The numbers were far more credible as economic forecasts go, but they do not mean that the single currency will go ahead without any of these six.

In fact, the two sets of forecasts were delivering the same message. It was that membership of EMU will be a political decision, subject to minimum economic performance constraints. There will be a broad membership, but Italy will be excluded initially.

Italy has achieved an incredible economic and political transformation in its eagerness to join the club, but it has not yet gone far enough to gain entry. Nothing it can do in the space of a year is likely to change that picture or the mind of the other members.

As Flemming Larsen, the IMF's chief forecaster, said when he presented the figures yesterday, the small discrepancies between one set of forecasts and another do not signal an economic problem, but rather a political one.

### Utilities met their Waterloo overseas

Running a utility is such a dreadfully dull job, though not one without its financial compensations, as the relentless tide of boardroom excesses among the privatised water and electricity companies has taught us. How much more fun it is to get away from the dreary world of electricity pools, distribution price

reviews and K factors and do a spot of business instead in Brazil, or Thailand or perhaps even Pakistan.

Fun these overseas adventures may be, quite apart from clocking up the Air miles. But as for being a profitable use of shareholders' funds, much less in the interests of their captive customer bases back home, forget it.

The track record of our utility companies when it comes to foreign endeavour is one of near universal and unmitigated disaster. The latest company to come a cropper is the National Grid, which has had the rug pulled rather abruptly from under its feet in Pakistan. The £400m contract it thought it had from the former government of Benazir Bhutto to build a power transmission network turns out not to be worth the paper it is written on.

The collapse of the project follows in a grand tradition. Thames Water and United Utilities have both had their fingers expensively burnt overseas and Anglian Water has run into a maze of problems in Brazil, an episode about which a great deal more has yet to be told.

If the managers who run our utilities really want to try their hand at being proper businessmen operating in competitive markets, then they should find other employers to experiment with. It is the excess profits that the utilities have reaped since privatisation which has bankrolled these hairbrained sorties into overseas markets. And if Labour's windfall tax has one thing in its favour, it is that it will surely put a stop to such profligate behaviour.

## Bosses at loggerheads over single currency

Michael Harrison and Chris Godsmark

Britain's two leading business organisations came to blows yesterday over the single currency amid reports that the Confederation of British Industry was set to back European economic and monetary union.

Lord Young, president of the Institute of Directors and a former Conservative cabinet minister, said: "I have never forgotten the way the CBI came out against all our trade union reforms in the 1980s because they wanted an easy time. It could be they are looking to support the single currency because it is the easy way out, because the pound is a problem."

Tim Melville-Ross, the IoD's

director-general, followed up Lord Young's criticisms, saying EMU would be damaging for the country and its members. Although it had not canvassed members recently, its last polls showed 70 per cent opposed to EMU. "It is becoming a big company versus small company debate," he added.

A number of large companies including Unilever, whose chairman Niall Fitzgerald heads the CBI's Europe committee, are strongly pro-EMU. But Mr Melville-Ross said: "Big companies should look beyond their own corporate interests to the wider economy. It is a narrow-minded view when big companies say a single currency is good for Europe."

The CBI, however, sought to distance itself from reports that it was poised to come out in support of Britain joining the single European currency.

It confirmed it had embarked on a private internal consultation



Euro options: The CBI director-general Adair Turner is preparing to canvass industry on the single currency

exercise which would lead to an official view on the euro by the summer. These options were being put to members at council meetings in a briefing document written largely by Adair Turner, director-general, and Kate Barker, chief economist.

However, the CBI insisted one of the options was for the UK to stay out of monetary union "for the foreseeable future". The other two options are thought to be to join in the first wave of countries in 1999 and to wait on the sidelines before making a decision.

## Europe's £50bn-a-year fraudsters 'threaten economic prosperity'

Katherine Butler  
Brussels

Europe's fraud gangs are hauling in up to £50bn each year and are threatening the EU's economic prosperity, an investigation sponsored by the European Commission has found.

Sophisticated computer-based frauds perpetrated against insurance companies, banks, investment firms and public agencies rival the narcotics trade in scale, according to the report.

It follows a year-long investigation by accountants and management consultants Deloitte and Touche.

The study identifies 10 of the most worrying forms of hi-tech crimes, including mobile phone cloning, thought to be growing at the rate of 40 per cent a year. Credit card and other banking frauds, counterfeiting of branded goods and pharma-

ceuticals, fraudulent investment schemes, smuggling of cigarettes and alcohol to evade customs duties, fraudulent bankruptcy and insurance cheating are all cited as highly profitable areas for corrupt individuals or organised criminal networks to exploit.

Cloning of mobile phones, where the identity of one phone is programmed into another at the expense of the original owner, is costing the UK alone almost £100m a year, the report says. The insurance industry, meanwhile, is losing at least £6bn a year and the report suggests that around half of all commercial fire claims in the UK may involve arson.

There is evidence to suggest that in many cases proceeds from these illegal claims are transferred abroad. Private corporations most susceptible to losses from fraud tend to have a certain profile, according to

the evidence gathered by Deloitte and Touche. They frequently have a dominant chief executive, a secretive management culture and fail to maintain systems for keeping track of data and documentation.

Differences in the laws of the EU member states and the absence of any effective judicial co-operation are blamed in the report for allowing trans-frontier fraud to thrive.

"There is clear evidence determined fraudsters deliberately and cynically manipulate and take advantage of the different regulatory and monitoring regimes across the European Union..." This problem must be tackled on an international basis, said Will Inglis of Deloitte and Touche.

Brussels will use the findings to call for the harmonisation of anti-crime legislation, for example on the seizure of illegal assets and criminal proceeds or

the penalties attaching to fraud, which vary widely.

In some jurisdictions there is not even a legal definition of fraud. The European Commission has no direct powers to combat fraud-related activities but would gain the right to initiate legislation if proposals to bring judicial co-operation under the scope of the EU treaty are agreed at the Amsterdam summit in June.

The report suggests that common EU standards on banking secrecy and the anonymous ownership of corporations as well as the criminalisation of all the components of fraudulent activities are required.

Lax controls by any one EU member state adversely affects others, it stresses.

Luxembourg, for example, is frequently used as an entry point for pirated CDs which are then distributed throughout the Community.

## IMF cheery on world economy but warns against EMU delays

Diane Coyle and Sarah Helin

Prospects for the world economy are rosy but the contrasts between the fortunes of different countries are becoming starker, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In a new set of economic forecasts for growth in the Anglo-Saxon economies and downgraded the outlook for continental Europe.

The IMF said none of the big five EU countries would meet the single currency target of a 3 per cent of GDP government deficit.

But it warned that there must be no delay to economic monetary union because the uncertainty was undermining growth.

Yet, in sharp contrast, the European Commission produced its rosiest forecasts for economic and monetary union yesterday, predicting that 13 countries would meet the key deficit criterion to qualify for the launch as growth picked up.

Brushing off renewed accusations that its predictions are massaged, the Commission predicted Germany, France, Portugal, Spain and Austria would meet the deficit ceiling dead-on. All five would hit the 3 per cent figure, which must be attained this year by countries hoping to join at the launch on 1 January 1999.

It was "no coincidence" that the figure should be precisely 3 per cent in so many cases, said Yves Thibault de Silguy, the Economics Commissioner. Attaining that target had been the countries' objective since the Maastricht Treaty. The Commission used the occasion to counter predictions that single currency might be delayed.

The IMF's semi-annual World Economic Outlook was

more measured. It said the run-up to EMU was taking its toll on the European economies, because of budget cuts and uncertainty about the shape monetary union would take. "It is critical to get through this period promptly by bringing the project back to term within the agreed time frame," the report said.

It put government deficits in 1997 above the critical 3 per cent of GDP level in France, Germany, Italy, the UK, Spain and Greece, although the report said progress on deficit reduction had been impressive. It added that but for weak growth, all but four EU members would have met the target last year.

The IMF trimmed its 1997 forecasts for growth in Germany and Italy. Nowhere on the Continent does it see a chance of significant falls in unemployment this year, calling for more extensive reforms of employment

legislation and benefit systems. However, it raised its growth forecasts for the US, UK and Canada. Although warning of the risk of a sharp correction on Wall Street, the report said: "There are few signs of the tensions and imbalances that fore-shadow significant downturns in the business cycle."

The risk of higher inflation in the UK points to the need for a tougher fiscal policy and an increase in interest rates, the Fund's economists say. They also reckon a further moderate rise in US interest rates will be needed.

On the other hand, the IMF said there might be a need for interest rates on the Continent to fall. Reductions in recent years should have been more rapid in response to the economic downturn.

Despite the differences between the EU and the authoritative IMF figures, Mr de Silguy insisted: "There has been

no tinkering or trading." Suspicion has centred particularly on Germany in view of a series of gloomy economic predictions. It has become increasingly clear in recent weeks that the rest of the EU may come under pressure to turn a blind eye if Germany narrowly overshoots the deficit ceiling.

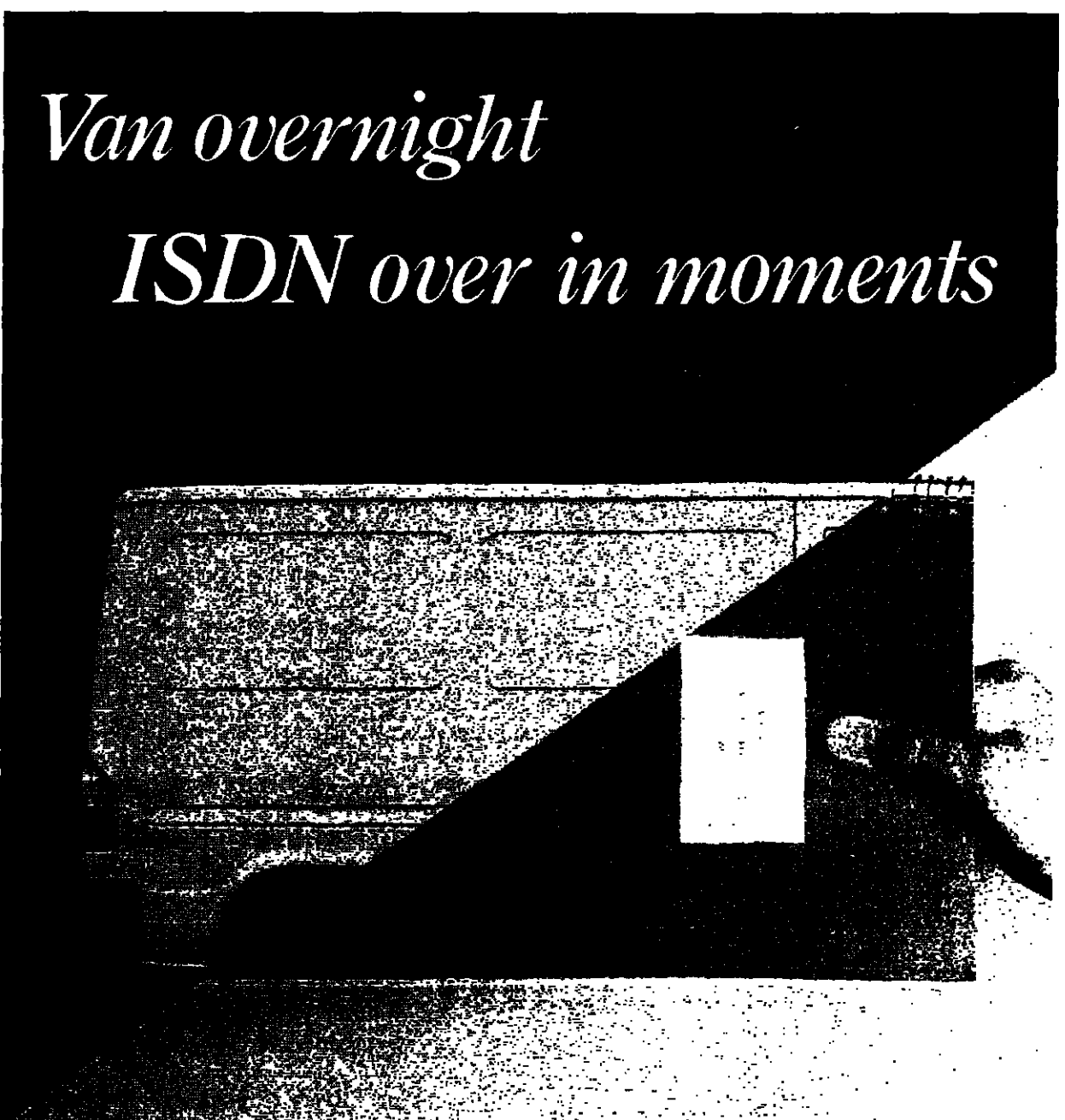
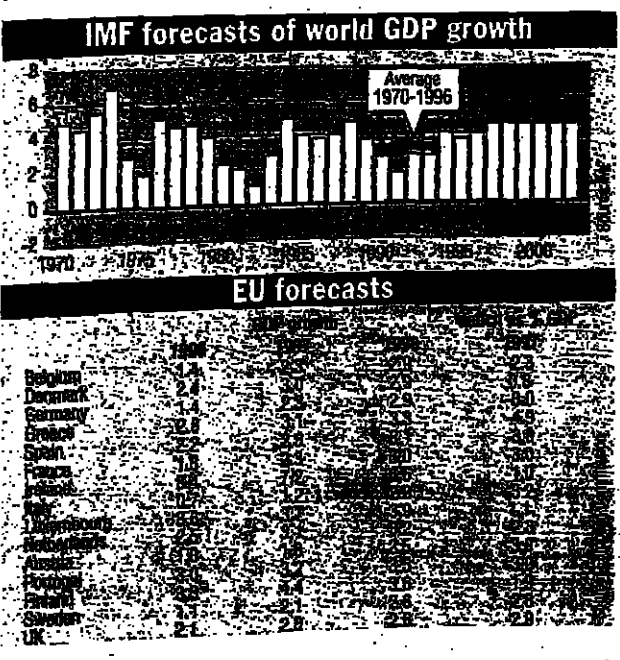
This was all but confirmed yesterday by Commission officials. They insisted differences were simply caused by "rounding up or rounding down of the figures".

Predictions that the Italian deficit would stand at 3.2 per cent this year and an even higher 3.9 per cent next year caused storms of protest in Rome. The Italian government now realises that it is unlikely to be given the same leeway as Germany, on the grounds that its budget-cutting measures are less "sustainable".

Mr de Silguy did not rule out the chance Italy could still make the grade, but he stressed any one-off measures must be supplemented by more lasting cuts.

The Commission figures showed that most countries will continue to over-shoot the Maastricht debt criteria - many seriously. However, it is already clear that the Commission favours more flexibility on the debt criterion, stating only that countries should be moving towards the 60 per cent ceiling.

Its rosy view of the next two years was based on a series of favourable economic assessments, including a prediction EU-wide growth will continue to rise, reaching 2.4 per cent in 1997 and 2.8 per cent in 1998. Elsewhere in its report, the IMF called on Japan to speed up deregulation of its economy. It trimmed its prediction for Japan's GDP growth this year, although expecting a pick-up in 1998.



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# Bank of Scotland steady as a rock

## THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY MAGNUS GRIMOND

The Bank of Scotland has proved rock-steady in its performance through the UK's boom, bust and subsequent recovery. The bank, probably Scotland's biggest, has eschewed the excursions into investment banking, insurance underwriting and US banking which have brought mixed results for rivals. Instead it has used its limited presence south of the border to cherry-pick the best business there, while making limited forays into Antipodean banking.

Last year proved another vintage one for the bank, although the picture is muddled by acquisitions and disposals. The 22 per cent jump in pre-tax profits to £664m in the 12 months to February is more like 27 per cent when the effects of deals are stripped out, including the first full year of BankWest, the Western Australia bank acquired for £437m in 1995.

BankWest was one of the few shadows to darken another strong set of figures. The disappointing earnings of AS95m (£45.2m) last year, AS9m below the prospectus forecast, were blamed on "unprecedented" pressure in home loans, which has seen interest margins more than halve to 1.7 per cent. Peter Burt, chief executive, warned yesterday the bank had further to go. But effort is being put into cutting costs there, where the cost-income ratio is now 8 percentage points above the parent bank. There was also a note of caution surrounding Countrywide, the former New Zealand building society owned by BoS, where intense competition continues to hit margins.

But the group continues to power ahead in its home market, with little help from lower bad debt provisions, which fell just 1 per cent to £175m. Profits of £399m from the clearing bank represented an underlying rise of 29 per cent on the back of strong lending figures: mortgages were up 14 per cent, while credit cards showed a 17 per cent rise. With nearly two-thirds of its business coming from England, the bank remains in the market for a building society, but not at current prices.

Meanwhile, its lack of branches in England has put it at the forefront of "virtual" banking. The latest manifestation, the banking link-up with J Sainsbury, is storming ahead. It has signed up 100,000 customers after just eight weeks, when, as insiders at the bank gleefully point out, it took Direct Line, owned by arch-rivals the Royal Bank of Scotland, eight years and tens of millions of pounds in advertising to get 500,000 customers. The bank reckons the business, just one of 300 link-ups with outside organisations, could be profitable in 18 months.

The sharp deceleration in the fall in bad debt provisions and a drop in interest margins suggests the banking cycle is about to turn. But BoS should be well geared to any consumer boom around the corner, while its innate cau-

tion should allow it to weather any downturn that follows.

Profits are expected to rise to £725m this year, putting the shares, down 0.5p at 3358.5p, on a forward multiple of 10. Attractive.

### Bargain discovery for Enterprise

Enterprise Inns lived up to its name yesterday by snapping up rival pub chain Discovery Inns for £46m in cash and raising £33m through a three-for-eight rights issue at 196p a share to fund further acquisitions during the summer. The deal looks cheap, given that Discovery's advisers valued the company at £55m, or 14 times historic earnings, when it was on the point of floating last December. It missed the boat and its venture backers are now selling out.

Enterprise is acquiring 277 pubs, mainly in Wales, the West Midlands and the West Country, and a business that made an operating profit of £5.1m on a turnover of £21.7m in the year to September, when net assets were valued

at £16.4m. The properties alone have just been valued at £47.8m.

Enterprise will integrate the estate into its portfolio of 872 pubs, close 30 to 40 of the least viable, and convert most of the 45 managed pubs back into long-lease tenancies.

The chief executive, Ted Tuppen, claims this is more effective than ownership for pubs turning over less than £10,000 a week.

Meanwhile, Enterprise has renegotiated Discovery's supply agreement with Whitbread, which will result in more Whitbread beers being sold in Enterprise pubs and bring a wider range of national and regional beers into the Discovery estate.

Merger costs of £2m in the current year will buy annual savings in excess of £1m from next year, so the deal should be earnings enhancing in 1997/98.

The acquisition came as Enterprise announced a 74 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £6.2m in the six months to 29 March. Most of the growth came from the acquisition of the John Labatt estate of 413 pubs for £62m last June, but like-for-like income grew 8 per cent, appreciably ahead of the industry average.

Several more deals are under consideration, but the acquisition of surplus Pubmaster pubs in South-east England, where Enterprise is weakest, would make greatest sense.

At 242.5p, up 0.5p, the shares stand on a forward price-earnings ratio of 11, falling to 9, assuming profits rise to £15m this year and £21m next. An interesting punt in a currently fashionable sector.

### Drought warning hits Hozelock

Few can have been surprised that Hozelock was forced yesterday to issue a statement to reassure investors about its prospects given the precipitate fall in its share price this year. The near straight-line drop from 488p in February to a recent low of 377.5p was prompted by growing fears of water shortages after the driest two years in the UK since the 18th century. As the UK's dominant manufacturer of garden hoses, with around 70 per cent of the market, the company has been inundated with calls from investors worried about the possible effect of hosepipe bans and other restrictions on water use.

Yesterday it moved to soothe nerves by pointing out that restrictions had yet to be enforced anywhere, apart from a sprinkler ban covering 825,000 consumers in the Southern Water region. More to the point, it said that profits for the first six months to March would be over £3m. Even though that represents a significant fall on the £3.33m reported last year and includes a £300,000 profit on the sale of the group's old warehouse, it was in line with market expectations, sending the shares 45.5p higher to 425.5p by the close.

David Codling, the chief executive who steered the group to flotation in November 1993, said spring had come early for Hozelock, with an "excellent" April and strong demand for its products right across Europe. Such is the confidence of Mr Codling and his board that their bullishness spreads out as far as the prospects for the company's full year to September.

The fall in first-half figures has been well flagged by Hozelock, which is seeing more sales and profits pushed into the summer months by the big retailers' just-in-time stocking strategy. Williams de Broe, the stockbroker, are looking for full-year profits of £10.9m, which puts the shares on a forward multiple of 14.

The threat clearly remains that the dry spell will eventually cause hosepipe bans, or that the summer weather fizzles out half-way through, also like last year. Still worth holding, with growth to come in Europe and from new businesses.

# National Grid to sue Pakistan over cancelled contract

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

National Grid yesterday became the latest privatised utility to suffer an embarrassing setback to its overseas ambitions, revealing that a project to build, own and operate a £400m power transmission network in Pakistan had been unexpectedly cancelled by the country's new administration.

The Grid, which runs the trunk power transmission network in England and Wales, said it was suing the Pakistan government for £21m (£13m), after it refused to extend a letter of support guaranteeing the project. The letter expired on 31 March, before the Grid's consortium had completed moves to finance the venture and sign contracts.

Like other utility companies the Grid had apparently been the victim of overseas politics. The contract was awarded two years ago by the government of Benazir Bhutto's People's Party. Late last year Mrs Bhutto was

ousted after charges of mass corruption were made against her administration and was replaced as prime minister by Nawaz Sharif.

The legal claim is for compensation to cover the first stages of arranging the project including paying expenses of contractors and developers. The Grid said its share of the claim was for \$2.4m for the last financial year.

A Grid spokesman yesterday put a brave face on the news. He said: "The door isn't closed completely. We hope we can reach an amicable solution to this." Privately, though, the company is thought to have accepted its chances of winning business in Pakistan are "dead and buried".

Though the total sums involved are small in relation to the Grid's earnings, the news means a potentially lucrative opportunity for the group to use its expertise to expand abroad has been lost. The Grid's other foreign projects include planning a transmission system in

Argentina, along with activities in India and the Philippines.

The Pakistan project was to build a 1,400km cable from the northern capital, Lahore, to Jam Shori in the south. Work was to be carried out by Balfour Beatty with equipment supplied by Reynolds, a subsidiary of Rolls-Royce. The Grid had claimed it would complete two-thirds of the work by December 1997, though the timetable had already slipped behind schedule.

The wave of utility privatisation in the fast growing economies of Asia and Latin America have attracted many UK utilities, with mixed success. Earlier this month Anglian Water said it would have to set aside £15m to cover losses on foreign contracts, including Brazil where the group is embroiled in legal action. Unexpected problems to a sewerage project in Thailand have cost United Utilities £83m, while Thames Water last year pulled out of non-regulated contracting operations at a cost of £95m. Grid shares fell 1p to 215.5p.

# EC forces Anglo to cut 27.5% stake in Lonrho

Magnus Grimond

Anglo American Corporation, the South African mining giant, said yesterday it was ready to pursue several options after receiving confirmation that the European Commission was forcing it to cut its stake in Lonrho from 27.5 per cent to less than 10 per cent.

The decision, the first time the European body has ordered the disposal of shares as a condition of clearing a deal between main groupings, was made as a result of fears that the stake would allow Anglo to dominate the platinum market.

It follows the blocking of an ago of a merger deal between Lonrho's platinum business and

that of Gencor, another South African mining group, by European competition commissioner Karel Van Miert.

The Commission said yesterday the latest link-up would have resulted in Anglo and Lonrho controlling the world's platinum output.

"The companies' market shares, their low-cost reserves and the fact that the Russian producer's market position is expected to decrease in the future would lead to a combined Anglo-Lonrho having an estimated world market share for platinum production in excess of 60 per cent in a few years' time," it said.

Anglo said it was "very disappointed" at the decision.

"However, we have two years in which to divest this stake, a good relationship with Lonrho and a number of options to consider, so we are confident of a satisfactory outcome," Julian Ogilvie Thompson, the Anglo chairman, said yesterday.

The bulk of the Anglo holding in Lonrho was acquired in November after the South African group picked up an 18.4 per cent stake from Dieter Bock, the mining to motor distribution conglomerate's former chairman. One observer suggested that other South African groups, such as the black-controlled JCI or Gold Fields of South Africa, might be interested in the stake to be sold under the EC ruling.

## IN BRIEF

### BT managers on strike in central London

The union representing British Telecom managers claimed a three-day strike starting yesterday in central London had been "90 per cent supported" by members. The Society of Telecom Executives said of 820 network managers and computer software engineers in five buildings, most had decided not to come to work. However, BT said only 318 had taken part. "We're disappointed in the action but it will have no impact on customers," said a company spokeswoman. The STE said: "The target is not the customer. It's the company." The union is unhappy at pay increases which it says amount to as little as 0.5 per cent for some managers.

### RECs challenged over competition date

The 12 regional electricity companies (RECs) and two Scottish power businesses were yesterday challenged by the independent industry consumers' committees to give a public assurance that they would meet the 1 April 1998 deadline to implement domestic competition. Yvonne Constance from the chairman's group of committees said: "With less than a year to go, the electricity companies must now be in a position to gauge accurately whether they will deliver on time. We expect only definite answers to these straightforward questions."

### Siemens' overseas orders rise 11%

Siemens, the German electrical engineering giant, yesterday revealed an 11 per cent rise in world-wide orders in the half-year to the end of March, to DM53.9bn (£19.3bn). The group said growth had mainly come from its expanding business based outside Germany, where orders surged 20 per cent to DM35.7bn. It means the overseas parts of Siemens have overtaken the German businesses in importance in terms of orders. Sales on a global basis rose to DM58.2bn. Profits after tax were unchanged at DM1.08bn.

### Mine closure hits Waverley shares

Waverley Mining's shares dropped 15p to 39.5p on news that it had appointed a liquidator at its Monktonhall colliery after it was decided that flooding at its coal mine was more severe than anticipated. The closure affects 300 jobs at Monktonhall, in which Waverley has invested around £25m in equity and loans. Waverley said the loss of production and the likely cost of removing the water made a reopening of the mine no longer financially viable.

### Strong pound to dent Eurodis results

Eurodis Electron warned second-half results would fall well short of forecasts. It blamed the strength of the pound and high operational gearing. The company said most of the market growth for 1997, totalling 5 per cent, would be in the second half, which was the first half of its next financial year. Shares fell 37p to 133.5p.

### Scruttons chief resigns on profits warning

Scruttons warned pre-tax interim results would be "very substantially below" last year's figures. Its shares plunged from 330p to 260p. It blamed lower-than-expected sailings in its freight ferry services after a vessel was withdrawn in an accident. Angus Fraser, chief executive, has resigned from the board. Max Gladwyn, who becomes executive chairman, is to assume his responsibilities.

### Company Results

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Andrews Sylvest (F)	63.5m (27.0m)	7.3m (4.97m)	33.3p (19.2p)	10p (2p)
Bank of Scotland (F)	-	994m (645m)	31.0p (25.4p)	6.25p (8.50p)
James Watt (F)	98.8m (80.3m)	7.6m (5.3m)	12.4p (8.1p)	7.75p (6.00p)
Banquets (F)	97.9m (86.0m)	3.7m (1.2m)	7.40p (1.74p)	2.70p (2.25p)
Anglo Irish Bank (F)	-	113.7m (91.2m)	4.25p (3.44p)	1.60p
Enterprise Inns (F)	28.5m (12.4m)	8.3m (3.5m)	10.7p (7p)	2.5p (2.25p)
VI Holdings (F)	61.0m (50.3m)	1.2m (0.9m)	8.14p (5.2p)	2.95p (2.65p)
Highgate Technology (F)	82.5m (67.3m)	11.8m (12.3m)	8.04p (8.58p)	2.95p (2.67p)
PGA European Tour (F)	4.68m (0.73m)	2.77m (0.48m)	0.44p (0.34p)	0.05p
Scotlands (F)	8.65m (18.1m)	0.18m (3.5m)	0.35p (5.5p)	-
Willesborough Group (F)	3.24m (2.25m)	0.08m (0.28m)	-	-
(F) - Profit (A) - Income (P) - New months				

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## Shares elect to continue longest bull run in four years

□Securities house Henderson Crosthwaite is taking analysts and fund managers to Israel next month to see the plastic moulding operations of Technoplast, regarded as an industry leader. Since coming to market at 125p earlier this year the shares have drifted

to 91.5p. Henderson is looking for profits of £2.4m this year, putting the shares on a prospective p/e of 8.2.

❑ Shares of the 600 Group, the machine tool group, are recovery buy, believes Henry Cooke Lumsden. The stockbroker has a target of 160p against 135p yesterday. Profits this year is expected to be £11.1m, improving to £11.8m and then £13.9m.

The shares have fallen from 300p last year. In January the company warned it was experiencing weak markets in the UK.

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104	7 1/2 1/2 50	104	+	8.90	1347	125 1/2 124 1/2	7 1/2 1/2 03-05 12 1/2 -	7.48
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## business

Institute of Directors' Convention told why business leaders should be treated like pop stars

## John Lewis boss defends fat cats



Britain's fat cats found themselves an unlikely ally yesterday in Stuart Hampson, chairman of John Lewis, the department store chain that eschews conventional capitalism in favour of employee involvement, profit-sharing and social responsibility.

Mr Hampson told the Institute of Directors annual convention at the Albert Hall that business leaders should not feel "management guilt" about maintaining proper pay differentials between the boardroom and the shop floor.

Mr Hampson, who earned £243,499 last year, said however that it could not be right that in most businesses, incentives and rewards were focused disproportionately on senior management at the expense of other staff who deserved to feel valued and motivated. "I firmly believe we need to find a greater sense of fairness in the relationship between rewards at the top and those throughout the business as a whole. If more than a few were having their contributions to success recognised and being rewarded, we'd be demonstrating that wealth creation benefits all those who create wealth and not just the few who hold the wealth. That's a step towards making industry re-

cover its respect in society."

John Lewis has 36,000 employees—all of whom are called partners and own the business with shares held on their behalf through a trust.

Each year every employee from the chairman down to the lowest paid storeman receives the same percentage of their salary as a partnership bonus. Last year a total of £82m was handed out, equivalent to 20 per cent of pay.

"I can tell you, if you want to show your workforce how well the business has performed over the past year, a 10-week bonus is a pretty clear message."

In his book, said Mr Hampson, if you wanted to satisfy the

customer you had to start by putting the employee first. "If you think of employees as a resource to be utilised as required, to be discarded when times get hard, to be down-sized or re-engineered, then don't be surprised if they behave like it."

Mr Hampson went on to warn that respect for business and business leaders had taken a major knock as a result of the fat cats debate. "Let's face it. The Greenbury Report hasn't put the matter to bed. It's just led to repackaging. The £1m-a-year club continues to recruit new members as long-term incentive plans trip in."

Michael Harrison

Mr Hampson walked away from Williams Holdings, the group he founded with Nigel Rudd, to go his own way with Burnfield five years ago. Mr McGowan recruited Mr Snowdon as finance director at Burnfield and then promoted him to managing director, while he was chairman. The partnership worked well at Burnfield. When they took over its market cap was £13m and by the time they sold out at Christmas it was worth £64m.

Mr McGowan's recent history at House of Fraser, where he is also chairman, has been less happy. He was brought in three years ago very much as the "golden boy" to float the company, but its share price today still lags some way behind its issue price. Last week Mr McGowan promised shareholders that if there was another cock-up at House of Fraser, he would fall on his sword.

No doubt this will be of comfort to shareholders in Umeco, whose biggest business is making aircraft refuelling systems. Messrs McGowan and Snowdon have reversed into the company by buying 5 per cent of the enlarged equity, following Umeco's acquisition of another company, Wellmar, and a £9.2m placing and offer.

Mr Snowdon tells me Umeco's profits are growing by around 30 per cent a year and they're looking to increase export earnings. They're also looking for a new head office, preferably somewhere near Stratford-upon-Avon, where Mr Snowdon lives.

Would you buy life assurance from Tony Blair? How about an endowment policy from John Major or a PEP from Paddy Ashdown?

Continuing our series of election-related financial trivia, we learn from Cornhill Life that, of 1,000 people surveyed, 18 per cent would feel most happy buying a life policy from Mr Blair, with 13 per cent for both Mr Major and Mr Ashdown. The female vote of confidence was lower than the men's for all three politicians. So much for all that stuff about Mr Blair appealing to the female vote.

When it comes to which chancellor you would most like to look after your personal finances, Gordon Brown, with 6 per cent, beats Kenneth Clarke, with 3 per cent. Fully 80 per cent of those polled would prefer a "properly qualified financial adviser".

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John Wilcock

## McGowan and Snowdon move into manufacturing

Fresh from selling Burnfield, the hi-tech engineering group, to Fairay at the turn of the year, Brian McGowan and Clive Snowdon, have bought into a small manufacturing and distribution company, Umeco.

Mr McGowan walked away from Williams Holdings, the group he founded with Nigel Rudd, to go his own way with Burnfield five years ago. Mr McGowan recruited Mr Snowdon as finance director at Burnfield and then promoted him to managing director, while he was chairman. The partnership worked well at Burnfield. When they took over its market cap was £13m and by the time they sold out at Christmas it was worth £64m.

Mr McGowan's recent history at House of Fraser, where he is also chairman, has been less happy. He was brought in three years ago very much as the "golden boy" to float the company, but its share price today still lags some way behind its issue price. Last week Mr McGowan promised shareholders that if there was another cock-up at House of Fraser, he would fall on his sword.

No doubt this will be of comfort to shareholders in Umeco, whose biggest business is making aircraft refuelling systems. Messrs McGowan and Snowdon have reversed into the company by buying 5 per cent of the enlarged equity, following Umeco's acquisition of another company, Wellmar, and a £9.2m placing and offer.

Mr Snowdon tells me Umeco's profits are growing by around 30 per cent a year and they're looking to increase export earnings. They're also looking for a new head office, preferably somewhere near Stratford-upon-Avon, where Mr Snowdon lives.

Would you buy life assurance from Tony Blair? How about an endowment policy from John Major or a PEP from Paddy Ashdown?

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## PEOPLE &amp; BUSINESS



Change of direction: Brian McGowan left Williams Holdings to go his own way

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## BA counts cost of IRA hoax

Bob Ayling, chief executive of British Airways, yesterday told of the huge cost of Monday's IRA bomb hoax which closed Gatwick airport for most of the day, causing misery to thousands of passengers, writes Michael Harrison.

BA was forced to cancel more than 100 services, leaving 30,000 passengers marooned as it put its crisis management plan into operation.

Only two pilots and 20 cabin crew were able to battle their way through the traffic chaos to report for duty and by early afternoon 51 services had already been cancelled.

With chaos reigning in the terminals and BA flights around the world instructed to remain on the tarmac, the airline began booking up hotel rooms across south-east England for stranded priority passengers.

A total of 14 aircraft were in the air at the time of the alert and were diverted as far afield as Bournemouth, Southampton and Cardiff.



Opening salvo: Lord Young at the podium as Tim Melville-Ross looms large on a screen

## Labour plans under attack

Michael Harrison

The leadership of the Institute of Directors yesterday pledged that its annual convention would be an "election-free zone" but then proceeded to attack both the Labour Party and to a lesser extent, the Tories.

Lord Young, the IoD president, opened proceedings at the Albert Hall by saying that the business community would live with whichever party was in power on 2 May adding "and may the Lord have mercy on all our souls".

He refused to be drawn into openly criticising Labour but said that an increase in corporate taxation had to be on the agenda if it came to power.

Tim Melville-Ross, the institute's director general was less inhibited, attacking key elements of Labour's manifesto and warning of the uncertain future Britain would face under Labour. "There is so much uncertainty about what a new Labour government would do that really it has to be resolved

as soon as possible. Are they for privatisation or against? Are they for a single currency or against?"

He also criticised Labour on its support for the social chapter and the windfall tax which he described as "retrospective, perverse, and introduced for the wrong reasons".

However, Mr Melville-Ross also took the Conservatives to task, saying that a re-elected Tory government would be "a long way short of perfect".

He said there were real concerns about the way the Tories had managed the economy and the size of the borrowing requirement, nor did the IoD support Tory proposals for further industrial relations legislation to give the public the right to sue unions which held strikes in essential services.

Mr Melville-Ross said that, whichever party won power, interest rates were likely to go up to take the heat out of the economy. There was also likely to be a tightening of fiscal policy to keep a lid on consumer spending.

## Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	1.6233	5.6	24.21	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
Canada	2.0928	81.54	170.182	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
Germany	2.7770	70.33	207.396	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
France	8.2794	225.21	675.644	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
Italy	2.7844	82.0	245.625	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
Japan	20.472	99.48	286.250	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
UK	1.6233	5.6	24.21	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
Belgium	37.083	9.0	26.425	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
Denmark	10.590	250.90	740.600	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
Netherlands	3.2088	95.77	286.250	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
Ireland	10.487	81.0	245.625	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
Norway	14.335	280.210	790.670	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
Spain	23.445	225.183	675.644	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
Sweden	12.880	128.80	386.400	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
Switzerland	2.5722	63.84	191.520	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
Australia	2.0928	81.54	170.182	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
Hong Kong	5.777	67.38	191.520	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
Malaysia	4.0542	0.0	0.0	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
New Zealand	2.0928	81.54	170.182	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
Saudi Arabia	5.0892	0.0	0.0	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
Singapore	2.3448	0.0	0.0	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80

## Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	Spot	1 month	3 months
Argentina	1.6233	5.6	24.21	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
Australia	2.0928	81.54	170.182	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
Canada	2.0928	81.54	170.182	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
China	1.6233	5.6	24.21	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
Egypt	5.777	67.38	191.520	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
Ghana	3.2088	95.77	286.250	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
Greece	4.1333	0.0	0.0	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
India	5.0892	0.0	0.0	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80
Korea	1.6233	5.6	24.21	1000	139.40	29.28	82.80

Forward rates quoted high to low are at a discount; subtract from spot rate. Rates quoted low to high are at a premium; add to spot rate. \*Dollar rates quoted as reciprocals. For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0891 123 3033. Calls cost 50p per minute.

## Interest Rates

UK	500%	Germany	250%	US	8.75%	Japan	Discount	0.50%
Base	5.00%	Discount	4.50%	Prime	8.75%	Discount	2.50%	3.00%
France	3.5%	Prime	4.75%	Discount	5.00%	Discount	100%	4.25%
Italy	7.5%	Prime	5.00%	Discount	5.00%	Discount	100%	4.25%
Belgium	2.75%	Prime	5.00%	Discount	5.00%	Discount	100%	4.25%
Netherlands	2.75%	Prime	5.00%	Discount	5.00%	Discount	100%	4.25%
Advances	2.75%	Prime	5.00%	Discount	5.00%	Discount	100%	4.25%

## Bond Yields

Country	5yr	10yr	15yr	20yr	Country	5yr	10yr	15yr	20yr
UK	7.0%	7.2%	7.2%	7.5%	Netherlands	2.5%	4.7%	5.7%	5.7%
US	8.8%	8.7%	8.2%	8.8%	Spain	7.0%	8.0%	7.3%	6.8%
France	5.5%	5.8%	5.5%	5.5%	Italy	6.2%	7.1%	6.7%	7.0%
Germany	10.0%	1.4%	6.7%	7.8%	Belgium	5.0%	4.3%	6.2%	5.7%
Australia	8.0%	4.7%	6.0%	5.9%	Sweden	13.0%	5.3%	6.5%	7.2%
Japan	4.7%	4.2%	5.5%	5.7%	ECU	8.0%	5.0%	5.5%	6.3%

## Money Market Rates

Overnight	7 day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
Local Authority	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
Discount Market	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
Treasury Bills (Eur)	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
ECU Linked	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%

## Tourist Rates

2 Buys	2 Buys	2 Buys	2 Buys	2 Buys	2 Buys
Australia (Dollars)	2.0928	France (Francs)	6.1475	New Zealand (Dollars)	2.0928
Austria (Schillings)	13.1150	Germany (Mark)	2.7140	Norway (Krone)	10.8800
Belgium (Francs)	36.0000	Greece (Drachmas)	435.0000	Portugal (Escudos)	200.0000
Canada (Dollars)	2.0928	Hong Kong (Dollars)	12.2500	Spain (Pesetas)	227.5000
Cyprus (Pounds)	2.0928	India (Rupees)	12.2500	Sweden (Kronor)	12.2500
Denmark (Krone)	10.4870	Italy (Lira)	2.0928	Switzerland (Francs)	2.0928
Holland (Gulden)	3.0400	Japan (Yen)	200.0000	Turkey (Lira)	200.0000
Finland (Markka)	8.2900	Malta (Lira)	0.6000	United States (Dollars)	1.0000

## Liffe Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open	Close
Long Oil	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Oil	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Gold	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Gold	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

## Liffe FTSE 100 Index Option

Settlement	Strike	Settlement	Strike	Settlement	Strike
3000	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
3000	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
3000	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
3000	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000

## Energy

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open	Close
Long Oil	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Oil	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Gas	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Gas	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

## Commodity Indices

Index	Settlement	High/Low	Open	Close
Long Oil	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Oil	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Gas	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Gas	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

## Industrial Metals

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open	Close
Long Oil	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Oil	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Gas	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Gas	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

## London Metal Exchange

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open	Close
Long Oil	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Oil	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Gas	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Gas	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

## Precious Metals



# Istabraq has style of Champion

## Racing

GREG WOOD reports from Punchestown

The wild, impromptu party which followed Istabraq's win in the Royal Sun Alliance Hurdle at Cheltenham for many the finest moment of his year's Festival, and the good news after the second day of the big meeting here is that it might have been just a rehearsal for an even better celebration next year.

The field for the Stanley Cooker Champion Novices' Hurdle may have been weaker than anything you will find at Cheltenham, and the trip was half a mile further than the Champion Hurdle, but such was the ease of Istabraq's victory that all thoughts afterwards were of the 1998 championship. Except, that is, those of JP McManus, Istabraq's owner. Or so JP would have us believe.

"I really haven't thought about it," McManus said, though of course he knows as well as anyone that a passionate declaration of intent from Ireland's favourite punting son would spoil what little chance he might have of getting a while while price for Cheltenham. "I suppose it would be a target," he added casually, "why not?"

Why not, indeed, given that Istabraq's combination of a fast, ruthless gallop and the lethal finishing kick which took him from last to first at Cheltenham make him an immensely difficult

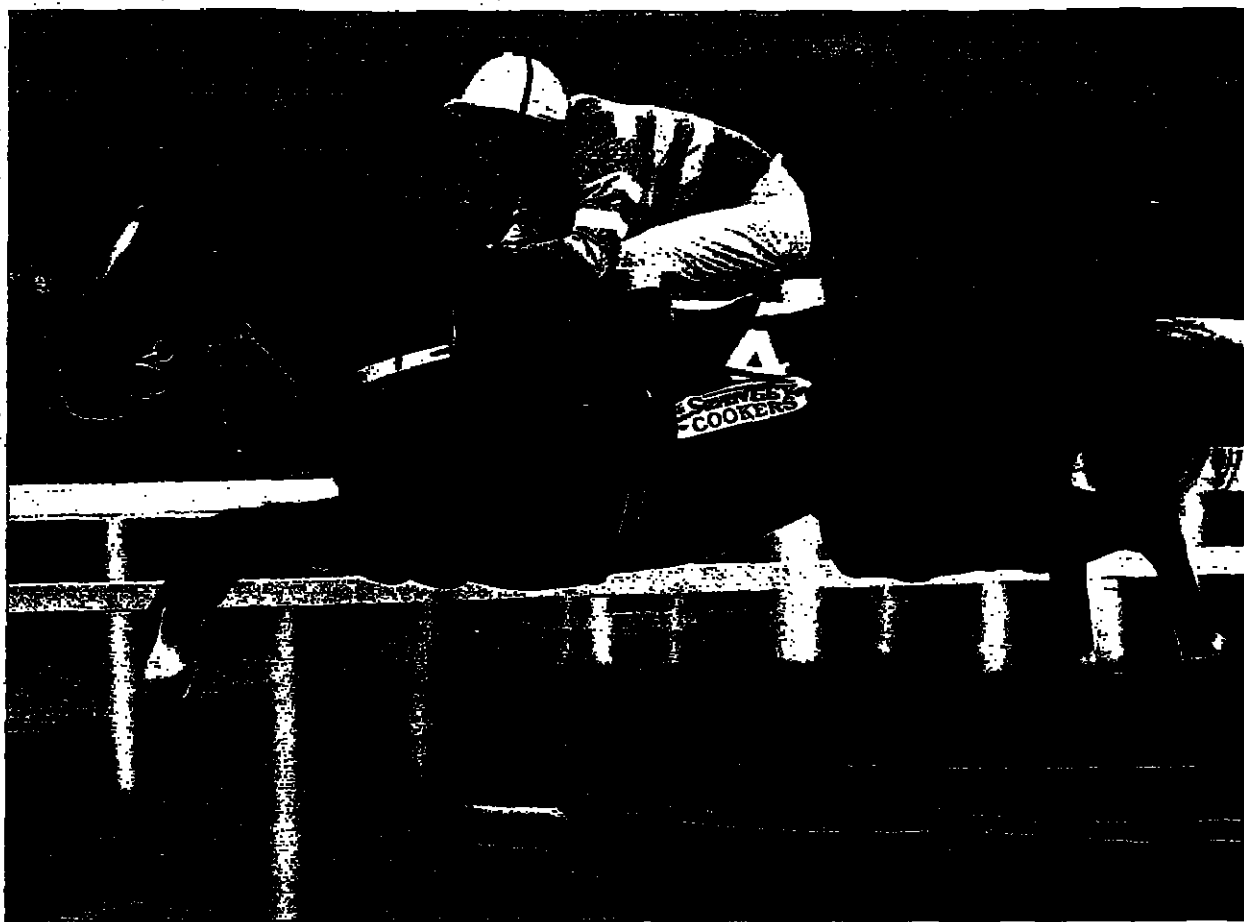
imal to beat. He is, without doubt, the second-best novice hurdler of the season, behind only the champion himself, Make A Stand, and also the only one with the potential to improve past Martin Pipe's hurdler.

"He certainly looks like he could be a Champion Hurdle horse," Aidan O'Brien, his trainer, said. "He'll be able to go with the pace all right, and the drop to two miles shouldn't be a problem."

Istabraq's victory came in just the second race of the day, but still he was completing a double for O'Brien, successful in the opener with Idiots Venture. This was another testament to the young trainer's talent, since less than 24 hours earlier, Idiots Venture had finished third in the BMW Chase. But there was not the slightest sign of fatigue as he galloped away from his field under top weight.

Even O'Brien, though, is not immune to sudden misfortune. Corker, his runner in the Heineken Gold Cup, the most valuable of the meeting, came to the last alongside Noyan with the rest of the 18-strong field well beaten, but crashed through it at maximum speed. Trevor Horgan, Corker's jockey, was taken to Naas General Hospital, where he was unconscious on admission. His condition later improved slightly and he was responding to treatment.

After Corker's fall, Noyan was left to record a second suc-



Istabraq jumps the final flight on the way to victory at Punchestown yesterday

Photograph: Julian Herbert/Allsport

cessive win in the race for a British stable, but unlike David Nicholson, who saddled Billygoat Gruff a year ago, Richard Fahey, Noyan's trainer, operates at the humble end of the scale. Yesterday's winner is one of just five chasers in his Yorkshire yard, and the horse box which carried Noyan to Punchestown was driven by Fahey himself.

"We saved him for this," Fahey said. "It's not often that your plans work out, but today they have. I don't know how Hal McGhee [the winning owner] is going to get his money home, because he had a really good bet. I just hope he's got a big money belt." No figures were mentioned, but McGhee was smiling

## Head injury for Dettori

Frankie Dettori has been stood down for two days with a mild concussion after taking a bang on the head in a fall at Epsom yesterday when unseated from Move With Edes before the Warren Stakes. He will have to pass a medical examination before racing at Sandown on Saturday if he is to take the ride on Benny The Dip in the Classic Trial.

Dettori had been taken behind the stalls on the Bill Turner-trained five-year-old when the gelding bolted and unseated him after travelling for a furlong. He walked to an ambulance and returned to the weighing room with a cut on his forehead.

Kieren Fallon has chosen to ride the Fred Darling Stakes (Beverly 2.10) in the 1,000 Guineas on Sunday week instead of stable-

# Hingis in doubt for Wimbledon

## Tennis

Martina Hingis, the world's leading women's player, could be forced to miss Wimbledon after undergoing surgery yesterday for an injury to her left knee suffered in a fall from a horse. The 16-year-old Hingis will not play for at least three weeks, which cover tournaments in Hamburg, Rome and Berlin, and there is a question mark against the French Open - the second Grand Slam of the season, which falls just a month before Wimbledon.

"So far it is certain that Martina will have to miss Hamburg, Rome and Berlin," said Melanie Motter, Hingis' mother and coach, who added that it was possible that her daughter would not play in the French Open from 26 May to 8 June. Withdrawal from Paris would leave Hingis with little time to get match fit for Wimbledon.

Hingis was able to stand and joke after Monday's fall, but the next day she was unable to straighten her left leg.

Hingis was examined by specialists near her home in Switzerland before having arthroscopic surgery for a partially torn ligament in Austria. "I'm relieved that my knee isn't that badly injured," she said.

The 16-year-old Hingis escaped unhurt when she fell from a horse in Australia before going on to win the Australian Open.

Although it would seem unwise for Hingis to risk her career, Motter has always insisted that her roller-blading daughter lives as normal a life as possible. "Martina's tennis is only possible because she doesn't just have tennis balls at the centre of her life," she said.

Five more seeds lost in the women's draw at Wimbledon. Jim Courier, Thomas Enqvist, Wayne Ferreira, Marc Rosset and Alberto Berasategui followed Pete Sampras, Thomas Muster and Boris Becker out of the clay-court tournament.

Results, Digest, page 27

## Robidoux ends his long wait at the Crucible

## Snooker

It took a long time coming but Alain Robidoux yesterday won his first match at the Crucible since 1992 to qualify for the second round of the Embassy World Championship. The French-Canadian beat Brian Morgan 10-8 for only his third-ever victory in Sheffield.

Morgan may have come through the qualifying rounds but he has had a useful season, finishing runner-up to Ronnie O'Sullivan at the Asian Classic last autumn, and was expected to prove a tough opponent. And the world No 49 from Essex duly refused to be brushed aside, wiping out his 5-3 overnight deficit to level at 7-7 before going ahead for the first time in the match at 8-7 thanks to a break of 72.

Morgan also had chances to win the next frame but missed a vital blue, and Robidoux punished him with a break of 58 to get on level terms. The world No 14 then clinched victory by book a meeting with Peter Ebdon's conqueror, Stefan Mazrocis.

"I had almost forgotten when I won my last match here," Robidoux said afterwards. "Was it before or after the war?"

Robidoux is enjoying his best season since turning professional in 1988. He reached the German Open final last December and is one of a handful of players chasing a place in the top eight for next season.

Jimmy White, the world No 21, began his campaign with a 5-1 lead over Anthony Hamilton in the morning session, despite a fourth frame that lasted almost 40 minutes. From 51-8 down, White took the frame 68-51.

## Johnson set to race in Britain again

## Athletics

Michael Johnson will make his first appearance in Britain for three years at the grand prix meeting in Sheffield on 29 June. Johnson, the first man to win the 200 metres and 400m at the same Olympics, will race at the Securicor Games over the longer distance against a field which may include Jamie Baulch and Roger Black.

The American's decision comes less than a year after he was refused a place in the 400m at a meeting in London for fear of demoralising his British rivals just before the Games.

Johnson's agent, Brad Hunt, said that Johnson would not compete in Britain again while Peter Radford remained in charge at the British Athletic Federation. The latest deal has been agreed following Radford's decision to leave the BAF.

Lindford Christie, who races today in the Qatar International, has re-emphasised his intention not to compete in any more major championships. "I am through with big meets," the 37-year-old former Olympic champion said. "Physically I am still strong but mentally I don't feel motivated enough."

The International Amateur Athletic Federation has defended its decision to allow the men-only meeting at Doha in the Muslim state of Qatar. The IAAF has no plans to censure or dictate terms to countries where traditions don't allow women to take part in international competition, a spokesman said.

Qatar has tempted an international field which includes Colin Jackson and Butch Reynolds to race out of season with a budget of \$2m (£1.25m).

## BEVERLEY

**2.10 Cathedral (nb)** 3.40 Teofilo  
**2.40 Double Gold** 4.10 Evening in Paris  
**3.10 HEN HARRIER (nap)** 4.10 Shaded

GOING: Good to Firm (westerly). FAVORITE: Double Gold. DRAW ADVANTAGE: High for 5L. Right-hand, galloping comes with very good 1L.

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## sport

## All-rounder who charmed a generation



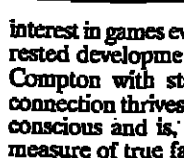
Denis Compton: Handsome, debonair and a sporting hero with nerves of brass Photograph: Allsport/Hulton Getty

Shortly before Arsenal met Liverpool in the 1971 FA Cup final I was made responsible for bringing together members of the team that defeated Liverpool at Wembley two decades earlier.

At a lunch put on by the *Daily Mirror*, a photograph was taken of them to be published alongside one as they once were. Of course, life after Arsenal had been kinder to some than others. Joe Mercer, Freddie Cox and George Swindin had gone into football management but the team's brilliant Scottish schemer, Jimmy Logie, was selling newspapers outside a department store in London. Nobody needed to ask Denis Compton how things were shaping up. Still handsome and debonair, he was seen frequently on television and had a newspaper column.

However you look at fame, Compton, who died yesterday at 78, is famous not merely for his prowess at cricket and football. Even people who never miss an opportunity to boast that they are utterly unimpressed about sport, and deem an

Ken Jones reflects on the late Denis Compton, perhaps the most exciting batsman of all time, a man whose debonair image and cavalier approach to sport and life captivated an era



interest in games evidence of arrested development, associate Compton with stardom. The connection thrives in their subconscious and is, therefore, a measure of true fame.

The proof is in the records and the memories of the men who played with, and against, Compton, especially during the long hot summer of 1947 when he amassed 3,816 runs, scoring a record 18 centuries that included six against the touring South Africans.

However, it was not merely that Compton was a great batsman and, in the view of many qualified judges, the most exciting of any time. It was not just that he had nerves of brass and a constitution that did not appear to require much sleep or bicarbonate of soda. Rather it was that — as John Lardner wrote of Walter Hagen — he was "one who succeeded as few

members of our meekly desperate species have done, in adjusting the shape, speed and social laws of the world to his own tastes."

Unless it was Compton's friend, the great Australian all-rounder Keith Miller, nobody seemed to get more fun out of sport. Now he has gone, following from that Arsenal team of 1950, Wally Barnes, brother Leslie, Mercer, Logie, and, recently, Reg Lewis.

You may think this pedantic and in the circumstances a little ungracious, but because Compton's 14 appearances for England at football were made in unofficial wartime matches it is not entirely accurate to describe him as a dual international.

greatest all-round sportsman England has ever known... but as a footballer, I find it rather difficult to form an opinion of Denis, for war-time football provided no proper test. He has a fine left foot, and clever ball control, and perhaps if he had devoted more time to football, since the war, he would have been able to achieve his ambition of adding a full cap to those he won during hostilities. As it is, Denis, quite unspoiled for all his brilliant success, is undeniably a better cricketer than he is a footballer.

Compton's cricketing prowess and good looks led to a breakthrough in sports marketing when an astute accountant, Bagel Harvey, signed him to an advertising contract with the makers of Brylcreem. Others soon followed: the Fulham and England inside-forward, Johnny Haynes, and a

'A legend with a film star status'

ADAM SZRETER

There were tributes from the worlds of cricket and football following the death yesterday of Denis Compton.

The former England captain Ted Dexter said: "I'm very sad to hear this. Denis was an inspiration to me. I saw him at Lord's as a schoolboy and got his autograph while he was fielding on the boundary. He was a definite genius with the bat. He adorned the game and we should mourn his passing."

Another former England captain Brian Close, who played against Compton just after the war, said: "In those years there were two great players for England. There was Denis and there was Sir Len Hutton. The great thing about Denis was that he enjoyed life to the full. He was a great, natural ball player and never took things too seriously."

The umpire Dickie Bird said: "I shall miss him, everyone will miss him. Not only was he a great player but he was also a friend, a true friend of mine. He's done a tremendous amount for English cricket, he was always on hand to help young cricketers. He was a tremendous ambassador for the game."

A more recent England captain Chris Cowdrey, Colin Cowdrey's son, said: "My mother and father were close friends of his and this will sadden them. But he had not been very well and no one would have wanted him to suffer. He was one of the truly great personalities of sport, let alone of cricket. He conveyed a sense of fun and he lived life."

Compton, of course, also played football for Arsenal and England and a spokeswoman for Arsenal said: "The club would like to pay tribute to the great Denis Compton. He was a talented all-round sportsman and our thoughts are with his family and friends."

Sir Stanley Matthews said: "He was a great footballer. I played with him many times in wartime internationals for England. I remember a particular game against Scotland when we won by several goals to one and Denis tore them apart down the left wing. I think Tommy Lawton scored three or four goals that day from Denis's passes."

The current Middlesex captain and England selector, Mike Gatting, said: "It is very sad. He was a legend at Middlesex. Everybody from the youngest on the staff to the oldest member has fond memories of him. Compo was friendly to me and always took an interest in my career. He was an amazing man."

The Middlesex coach and former player, Don Bennett, said: "He was a legend. We played Surrey in a three-day game in 1950 and 60,000 people came through the turnstiles, mainly to see him. He was the draw. He had film star status."

And the Prime Minister, John Major, said: "Those who ever saw Denis Compton had an imperishable memory of the greatest cavalier of cricket."

## TODAY'S NUMBER

500

The number of career singles victories recorded by tennis world No 3 Michael Chang following his win over Jan-Michael Gambill in the Monte Carlo Open yesterday. He joins Boris Becker (has 672), Thomas Muster and Pete Sampras in the 500 club.

## Connor's lessons for Stephenson

DEREK PRINGLE

reports from Chelmsford Essex 246 Hampshire 103-7

It is three years since John Stephenson departed Chelmsford for greener pastures and the captaincy of Hampshire. Even so, he should still remember the perils inherent in being seduced into bowling first by an Essex greentop that claimed 17 wickets in the day.

The first rule is you need some decent bowlers, a criterion only Cardigan Connor satisfied for the visitors with his wily 7 for 46. The second is that you don't want to bat until day two, a discovery Hampshire made when they ended day on 103 for 7, some 143 runs behind. Having won the toss Stephenson probably contemplated some kind of ascendancy. Instead he dismissed Essex for 246, his team were facing annihilation in three days.

With Robin Smith missing due to an Achilles tendon strain, Hampshire, despite the

addition of their Australian import Matthew Hayden, were always under-strength. It was a fact Essex's superior firepower with the ball soon exploited. Ashley Cowan, in particular, proved a real handful, taking the first three wickets, including the prized scalp of Hayden, caught off his glove as he tried to swivel onto a bouncer.

A tall man with a high action, the 21-year-old Cowan has the ability to generate good pace off a short run and he finished the day with figures of 4 for 35. He was well supported by Ronnie Irani, who did for Kevan James, bowling him playing back, as well as for Stephenson whose bat and pad catch was taken by Darren Robinson at short-leg.

But if Essex relied on team work, Hampshire were almost solely reliant on the 36-year-old Connor, currently enjoying a benefit year. To the envy of many, Connor has something of a reputation for being able to dismiss Graham Gooch, a distinction upheld when he had the great man, now in his 24th season with Essex, lbw.

But if that was the one they

wanted, Hampshire's spirits quickly flagged as Paul Prichard and Nasser Hussain went about the reconstruction, adding 97 for the second wicket, before Hussain had his off ball trimmed by a leg-cutter from Connor, who had by now changed to the River End.

With Prichard lbw on the stroke of lunch for a fluent 65, the stage was set for Stuart Law, left out of the Australian touring party, to reassert his impressive credentials. Adding a rapid 53 with Ronnie Irani, he looked untroubled until he was lbw, whipping across a straight ball from Dimitri Mascarenhas.

It left Irani contemplating the belligerent role he likes best and one, for Essex at least, in which he excels. Having pummeled a couple of scorers through the covers off the back foot, he was out one short of his half-century when he tamely skied a leading edge to James at cover.

That was Connor's fifth wicket and it was not long before he and Stephenson, having a belated bowl, polished off the tail, unaware of the ruin that lay ahead.



Nick Trainor and Tony Wright, Gloucestershire's openers, stride out at Grace Road yesterday Photograph: David Ashdown

## Surrey seamers toil Young impresses on debut Welsh on song

HENRY BLOFELD

reports from The Oval Somerset 311-5 v Surrey

In one sense, it was a sensational start to the season at The Oval. On the very first day, with more than a week of April to go, Surrey used two leg-spinners, Ian Salisbury and Nadeem Shahid, against some mostly determined Somerset batting.

In another, it was business much as usual, on a slow pitch which was full of runs. Surrey's seam attack which had a somewhat boring, dilatory sameness about it, had a good work-out against a side unwilling to waste the advantage of batting first.

The influence of Somerset's new coach, Dermot Reeve, was easy to see. If he can persuade his players to make the most of their abilities, Somerset will win more than five Championship matches this year.

For 30 overs, Mark Lawell

and three-quarter hours and Richard Harden and Piran Holloway also put their heads down. Surrey's four main seam bowlers, Martin Bicknell, Chris Lewis, Joey Benjamin, and Alex Tudor, all run in a long way and apart from Tudor in one spell before tea, did not look particularly threatening. They also bowled far too many no-balls contributing to the absurd total of 69 extras.

Four overs of Salisbury was the only variation from seam before lunch when he bowled Lathwell, who made the mistake of playing back to a top spinner. Salisbury had another 21 overs later in the day when the need for economy was less on his mind. As always he needs confidence to give the ball air and more of a twinkle, when he will be a more dangerous bowler.

The game was left rather more in balance when, shortly before the end, Adam Hollis, the fifth seamer, had Holloway caught behind and Mike Burns lbw in successive overs.

Surrey have appointed their

MIKE CAREY

reports from Leicester Gloucestershire 245 Leicestershire 99-3

They hoisted the Championship pennant in a pre-match ceremony here yesterday. Later, quite unscheduled and out of context with what had gone before, Shaun Young and Jack Russell unceremoniously hoisted Leicestershire's bowling to all parts in a manner that the champions will not want to see repeated too often this season.

It was the sort of thing, though, that can happen in the best of circles on the first day of the season and allowing for various indications of rustiness and the odd fielding lapses, Leicestershire probably felt that dismissing Gloucestershire for under 300 on a good pitch was not a bad day's work.

Alan Mullally probably thought so. When last sighted he was spraying the ball to all parts on England's behalf. Yesterday under the gaze of David Lloyd, but more likely because

he is again under the tutelage of Jack Birkenshaw, he bowled very straight, picked up five wickets and troubled the two left-handers, Russell and Young, more than anyone.

There was still not much evidence of any ability to bring the ball back into the right-hand bat, until Mike Smith appeared in the evening, one on a swing the ball much anyway. Mostly it moved off the seam, and then only under cloud cover. When the sun shone for lengthy periods, batting looked straightforward.

Thus Gloucestershire must have cursed the combination of early-season errors and inadequate footwork which plunged them to 84 for 5. That was their lowest point, not least when Mark Alleyne, their new captain, found himself in no-man's land and was left without scoring to James Ormond.

Positive action was called for at this stage and Russell provided it, which probably eased any pressure that Young might have been feeling in his first Championship innings. Russell was soon busy dabbling and nudging as well as leaving extravagantly

alone. In their frustration, Leicestershire bowled too short and were robustly hooked and pulled for their pains.

Young has played League cricket for Fleetwood and toured here with Young Australia two years ago. When Gloucestershire were seeking a replacement for Courtney Walsh, his pedigree was vouched for by a trio of knowledgeable cricketers in Terry Alderman, Brian Davison and Dave Gilbert; but one straight drive for four off the back foot would have been enough for many connoisseurs here.

On quicker pitches it is not difficult to imagine his forthright strokeplay causing a stir, even at Somerset's Bristol. Here both he and Russell were helped when Leicestershire, having obtained their early successes by bowling to a fullish length, degenerated to a foolish one on the pitch. Richards and Young helped themselves and added 112 in 29 overs.

Leicestershire have signed the Natal all-rounder Neil Johnson, who replaces the West Indian all-rounder Phil Simmons on a one-year contract.

## ROUND-UP

Warwickshire, the pre-season bookmakers' favourites to regain the Britannia Assurance County Championship, looked anything but a side set to reassert their superiority in the four-day game when the campaign began yesterday.

The 1995 champions were dismissed for just 151 by Glamorgan at Cardiff in their opening Championship innings of the summer, and then had no joy in the field as their opponents set about building a commanding lead.

Darren Thomas took 4 for 62 as the Welsh county showed that they can bowl sides out even before the arrival of their overseas players, Waqar Younis, from Pakistan. The off-spinner Robert Croft, who is likely to be on England duty for much of the season, took two wickets.

Glamorgan restricted Warwickshire to a best individual knock of 36 from Neil Smith, and then reached tea with their opening partnership of Steve James and Hugh Morris intact. James was eventually out for 83 but

Morris was unbeaten on 78 at the close with Glamorgan 195 for 1.

There were two centuries on the opening day of Championship play. Lancashire's Graham Lloyd was the top scorer — he was dismissed for 102 as Lancashire piled up a formidable tally of 494 for 9 at Old Trafford to turn David Boon's first day of serious action as captain of Durham into something of a nightmare. As well as Lloyd, Jason Gallian, Peter Martin, Glen Chapple and Mike Watkin all passed fifty.

Tim Curtis was unbeaten on 100 as Worcestershire made 286 for 3 against Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge. The 37-year-old Curtis, a former England opener, announced yesterday that he is to retire at the end of the season to take up a full-time teaching post at Worcester Royal Grammar School.

Devon Malcolm showed the form that once made him England's most-feared fast bowler, taking 6 for 74 as Kent were dismissed for 251 at Canterbury. However, Derbyshire were 35 for 4 at the close. At Hove, Northamptonshire scored 288 for 9 against Sussex.

## Britannia Assurance County Championship

First day of three

## Essex v Hampshire

CHELMSFORD: Hampshire (4pts), with three first-innings wickets standing, are 246 runs behind Essex (8). Today: 11.0. Essex: 1-120. Hampshire: 103-7. Essex: 1-120. Hampshire: 103-7. Essex: 1-120. Hampshire: 103-7.

## Leicestershire v Gloucestershire

LEICESTER: Gloucestershire (4pts), with seven first-innings wickets standing, are 245 runs behind Leicestershire (9). Today: 11.0. Leicestershire: 99-3. Gloucestershire: 245-5. Leicestershire: 99-3. Gloucestershire: 245-5.

## Glamorgan v Warwickshire

CARDIFF: Glamorgan (4pts), with nine first-innings wickets standing, are 286 runs behind Warwickshire (3). Today: 11.0. Glamorgan: 195-5. Warwickshire: 286-3. Glamorgan: 195-5. Warwickshire: 286-3.

## Surrey v Somerset

THE OVAL: Somerset (4pts), with three first-innings wickets standing, are 311 runs behind Surrey (5). Today: 11.0. Surrey: 311-5. Somerset: 311-5. Surrey: 311-5. Somerset: 311-5.

## Kent v Derbyshire

CHICHESTER: Derbyshire (4pts), with six first-innings wickets standing, are 216 runs behind Kent (8). Today: 11.0. Kent: 216-5. Derbyshire: 216-5. Kent: 216-5. Derbyshire: 216-5.

## Sussex v Northamptonshire

HOVE: Northamptonshire (4pts) are 288 for 9 in their first innings against Sussex (4). Today: 11.0. Northamptonshire: 288-9. Sussex: 288-9. Northamptonshire: 288-9. Sussex: 288-9.

## Warwickshire v Lancashire

TRIDENT: Lancashire (4pts) are 286 for 3 in their first innings against Warwickshire (4). Today: 11.0. Lancashire: 286-3. Warwickshire: 286-3. Lancashire: 286-3. Warwickshire: 286-3.

## Nottinghamshire v Worcestershire

TRIDENT: Worcestershire (4pts) are 286 for 3 in their first innings against Nottinghamshire (4). Today: 11.0. Nottinghamshire: 286-3. Worcestershire: 286-3. Nottinghamshire: 286-3. Worcestershire: 286-3.

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